

PREACHING TO DIASPORIC CARIBBEAN CHRISTIANS

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MICHAEL P.L. FRIDAY

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DEDICATION

For Vivienne

- Stabilizer, Ambitious, Lovely, Exciting, Faithful, Peaceful, Home.

For Davewin, Rhaema and Jeremy

- Deepen in faith, or nothing.

For Clara and Rochford

- Ready, on the other side, to rejoice with me.

For the Jamaica Baptist Union

- Incubator, Catalyst, Home.

For the Baptist Union of Trinidad and Tobago

- Waiting to exhale.

For New Life Baptist Church, Bellevue, Nebraska

- Possibility, Productivity, Peace, Permanence, Home.

For Vivienne

- (Yes, again!) You deserve double portion in every good thing!

For Jesus

- Here are Five Chapters and Two Projects! Home!

ABSTRACT

Caribbean immigrants to the USA, who are Christians, encounter challenges to their dual identity as immigrants and as Christians. If they are to maintain their faith, values and identity, they need a preaching ministry that recognizes their identity and the challenges they face daily. This study explores aspects of Caribbean identity, Caribbean Christian thought (known, commonly as Caribbean Theology), aspects of immigrant realities and the biblical message in First Peter, written to persons he describes as “aliens” and “strangers.” The study seeks primarily to derive, from First Peter’s message, a perspective for preachers who will minister to “Diasporic Caribbean Christians.” The study finds that “Diasporic Christianity” is valid. It finds that First Peter does address Diasporic Christianity issues. It finds that Christians in the US, in general, even if not immigrants, may experience a kind of diasporic reality. It finds that preachers should think intentionally about diasporic issues as they prepare to preach to Caribbean Christians in diaspora, other ethnicities in diaspora, and Christians, in general.

Chapter One

Preaching To Diasporic Caribbean Christians: *Is There Any Song In A Strange Land?*

The average Caribbean immigrant to the United States lives in a kind of “no-man’s-land.” No Caribbean immigrant resident in the United States would ever be mistaken for a European-American – not if the person is of African extract. And virtually no Caribbean immigrant with a strong sense of “Caribbeanness” would want to be considered African-American. This is more than sentiment – it has to do with identity. Victor Price (*Self-Determination: Ministering to West Indians in a Land of Social Change and Cross Cultural Conflict*) appears to be chomping at the bits in his eagerness to emblazon this sense of Caribbean or West Indian identity before the world. He declares on page ii,

I do not consider myself Black, nor could I ever be African American. I am West Indian, to say the least; I am St. Lucian at best. And, pressed further, I could not tell you anything else that I am. Yet I change, but that change still finds itself rooted in the seedbed of a St. Lucian mentality.

Price is not alone. Ninety-seven percent of persons he interviewed declared themselves to be West Indian, Black or “Other”; only 3% considered themselves African American. And this, even though more than 66% of his sample had already been resident in the United States for more than 15 years (115)! This strong sense of Caribbean identity marks out Caribbean immigrants as a people,

noticeably distinct from any other immigrants to or residents in America. At the same time, this Caribbean identity prompts tremendous challenge to and results in several problems for these immigrants.

The importance of this sense of identity multiplies exponentially when the consideration shifts from Caribbean immigrants in general, to Caribbean immigrants who are Christians. Apart from their strong Caribbean sense of identity, those Caribbean immigrants who are Christians also possess a strong and distinct faith. This faith, so distinct and so strong, has produced thinkers who in turn, from their reflection, have produced documents on Caribbean Theology. Among these thinkers are both immigrants to the United States and those who have remained at home.¹

Caribbean people are migrating to the United States in significant numbers. In 2003, of 33.5 million (foreign born) immigrants resident in the United States, 10.1% were from the Caribbean, behind only those from Asia, Central America and Europe (US Department of Commerce, Economics and Statistics Bureau, *The Foreign-Born Population in The United States: 2003*, p.1). In 1999 it was 10.5% of 26.4 million. This seems to represent a growing trend. It follows therefore, that any problems or challenges that accompany immigration

¹ Noel Leo Erskine, Lewin Williams, William Watty, Ashley Smith, and other Caribbean theologians, are cited in this work, below.

are also growing – and there are many. When Caribbean people migrate to the United States problems and challenges arise. There are problems related to the family, problems related to identity, problems related to employment, problems related to economics and problems related to immigration. Some also encounter problems related to the expressions of their faith. Who can sing a happy song with such problems? Caribbean immigrants who are Christians, and the rest, who are fairly familiar with the values of Christianity, find that in America, they are in a strange land – a kind of Babylon – where they might think they are unable to sing the Lord's song.

There is a significant population of Caribbean immigrants in American pews every Sunday bearing the marks of these, and other problems, in their bodies, their minds, their souls, their emotions, and in their theology. The churches in “Babylon” have a unique ministry opportunity. The churches that would do cutting-edge ministry to persons with “headaches”, such as these problems mentioned above, need to be aware of who these persons are and what their “headaches” are. This study will address that. These issues clamor for attention and answers in the sermons Caribbean immigrants hear, as much as they clamor in their minds and heads. Preaching is a ministry that may “fly below the radar” while other cultural, ethnic and special needs are addressed. But preaching is a primary ministry of the church. If preaching, to address the cultural and other needs, is ignored, then all other culture-focused ministry will

be weakened or even arguably misplaced. The church, as it does its ministry of preaching – or imparting spiritual truth (Price 3) – must be mindful of the core values and elements that create immigrants. “The church in its attempts at ministering to West Indians must focus on affirming their sense of identity in Christ and provide the congregation as the context within which the new immigrant redefines himself” (Price 108). The church that will deliver a serious and fulfilling pulpit ministry to Caribbean Christian immigrants in America must begin on the premise that both the identity and the Christian faith of the Caribbean immigrant are worthy of affirmation and sustenance.

It may be a reasonable assumption that preachers in churches that minister to people in the Caribbean Diaspora in America are interested in doing relevant ministry to them. If this is true, then the intention of this study is to enable them to realize this goal. Immigrants – Diaspora people, especially those who are Christians – are in need of a kind of preaching that enables them to retain their special identity, both spiritually and culturally. The aim of this study is to offer an opportunity for the American pulpit to adequately address and answer the special questions and challenges that Caribbean immigrants, in the United States, are facing. It may, where applicable, also extend whatever principles are derived, to other ethnic peoples in diaspora.

The biblical and theological under-girding for this focus, to be pursued in the next chapter, will be the First Letter of Peter. Peter wrote to Christians who possessed both a distinct faith and therein, a distinct cultural identity. It appears that these “Diasporic Christians” encountered certain problems and challenges. Diasporic Caribbean Christians would encounter many of these same problems and challenges twenty-one centuries later. The issues from that time are applicable to these times. Chapter four of this document would produce a significant outline of a book. The book will be aimed primarily at preachers who preach to Caribbean immigrants. It will outline at least briefly, major and significant problems and challenges Caribbean Christian immigrants in America experience. It will locate the parallels for those problems and challenges in the theology of Peter’s first letter, his audience and their issues in first century Asia-Minor. It will answer the questions related to the problems and challenges. It will frame those answers in homiletical terminology and concepts so that preachers may be better equipped to preach messages that meet the significant needs of immigrants. It will relate the relevant principles to any other diasporic people to whom the principles can be applied. The study will refer to some Baptist congregations, primarily in New York and Florida and a handful of congregations of other denominational persuasions elsewhere in North America, which consist mainly of Caribbean immigrant membership, and are led by Caribbean immigrant pastors. That study will be the basis of this thesis-project.

The book, however, will be addressed to all pastors who minister and preach to diasporic peoples of all origins.

In the ensuing chapters the following terms, with the following intended meanings, will arise.

Diaspora: A group of people, no longer resident or domiciled in their country of origin. This word is interchangeable with **immigrant** as well. It would often mean the *state* or *status* of being in diaspora.

Diasporic: An adjective, describing people in diaspora or conditions in diaspora. “Diaspora” and “diasporic” are interchangeable with “immigrant people” and “immigrant” as well.

Diasporic Caribbean Christians: Christians, of Caribbean origin, now domiciled abroad. In this study, it will always refer to those resident in the United States of America. “Diasporic Caribbean Christians” will often be abbreviated to “**DCC**”, and, in this study, will always and only refer to such persons in the USA.

America: In this study, this will mean the United States of America, and not North America in general, except where specified.

Chapter Two

Preaching To Diasporic Caribbean Christians: *Is There Any Scriptural Revelation?*

When Caribbean Christians migrate to the United States of America, life continues. Exactly how they order their lives depends dually on what drives and determines their faith and the spiritual diet that they are fed. There is a standard to which diasporic Christians can appeal for guidance about how to live their lives as Christians in a strange land. It is the same pattern to which preachers who shall minister to diasporic Christians may turn to gain perspective into their ministry. That pattern and standard is the First Letter of Peter.

Peter writes to Christians whom he describes as sojourners, aliens and strangers who are in diaspora in Asia-Minor. These Christians were, in several significant ways, far from “home.” There are sufficient parallels between the situation faced by the Asia-Minor Christians and Caribbean immigrant Christians to the United States in their own *sitz im leben*. Additionally, Peter, known as a preacher *before* he was a writer, acquits himself sufficiently as a theologian, pastor and preacher. His letter displays an understanding of the

plight of Christians living in diaspora. Those who preach to such hearers today, need to examine Peter's first letter.

Other passages of Scripture may well be investigated in connection with this issue of preaching to diasporic Christians. Among them would be some of the prophecies delivered during the exile in Babylon. Jeremiah's letter to the exiles (29:4-23) is certainly among the most compelling passages of that genre. It demonstrates in great detail, God's care and plans for the exiles. However, Peter's first letter makes a more relevant and comprehensive basis for this study. This is so if only from the viewpoint that exile, though similar, is not identical to diaspora. But there is more. While it is true that other prophecies are addressed to God's chosen people, Israel, First Peter is addressed specifically to Christians. The Jewish exile in Babylon was an involuntary action imposed on Judah; if the Christians in Asia-Minor were largely Jews, there is some agreement that many of them may have moved there voluntarily, whether under the pressure of persecution or otherwise. Even so, the exile was retribution for sinfulness; the Christians to whom Peter wrote were being vilified for doing good, and for simply being Christians! According to Daniel L. Smith-Christopher (*A Biblical Theology of Exile*), the exiles had reason for shame (Ezra 9:6-7; Daniel 9:5-8); there is instead (in I Peter 2:9-10) reason for pride in the diaspora (120-123). The

passages relating to exile are not useless for our purposes. But Peter's letter – material aimed at Christians in diaspora – is better.

Peter's 1st Century Asia-Minor and Our 21st Century America

It would be remarkable if the conditions that prevailed in America today closely resembled those of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia in Peter's time. They don't. But there are sufficient similarities to warrant an exercise of comparison between the two locations and the two eras. As this is done, it becomes apparent that First Peter has the authority to be considered a point of reference for preaching to Christians in diaspora.

There are some fundamental observations that can be made about the people, the places and the times to whom and to which Peter wrote. Those were "pagan" territories where Roman excesses prevailed. There is evidence for this scattered within the letter itself. But nowhere is it made as plain as in 4:3, where Peter cites a raft of excesses which appear to be transpiring around the Christians – debauchery, lust, drunkenness, orgies, carousing, idolatry. In fact, Peter calls it all a "flood of dissipation" (NIV, vs.4)! So depraved is this society that they are amazed when anyone declines to join their activities (vs. 4). Ernest Best (*I Peter*) claims that socially there were great extremes of riches and poverty in this society. There was some industrialization in the cities of Asia-Minor. It included small businesses, a scenario ripe for the hiring and maintaining of slaves who

were often well educated or skilled in a trade (17). According to Karen H. Jobes (*1 Peter*), Asia-Minor regions nearer Greece and Rome were urban and Hellenized. Greco-Roman culture and emperor worship prevailed. There was frequent travel to West. Evidence of quality education abounded: for example, Aquila, husband of Priscilla – and co-mentor of Apollos (Acts 18:1f) – was from Pontus; Epictetus, the philosopher, was from Heirapolis in Phrygia (22). From this snapshot we can conclude the following about Asia-Minor: (1) it was a society in which religious opinion, religious libertinism and therefore religious plurality abounded; (2) such a society is often impatient with or hostile to the gospel of Jesus Christ and so was Asia-Minor, according to Peter's letter (2:11-21; 3:8-17; 4:1-4; 12-19; 5:7-10); (3) it was a society in which the State was ever-present and ever-prevailing, making government feel "big"; (4) it was a society in which the progress of business, economics and productivity often devalued people; (5) it was a society in which there was a measure of upward mobility and sophistication: travel, education, and an emphasis on the arts and culture; and (6) it was a cosmopolitan society in which there were Jews, Gentiles, Greeks, Romans and others, scattered in co-existence.

When one fast-forwards to America in 2006 and compares American reality to the realities faced by Peter's readers, it is not too hard to see a parallel. In America today, many words are used to describe the prevailing culture: permissive, liberal, individualistic, post-modern, selfish, irreligious, secular

humanist, and, yes, pagan. Even people who are not particularly staunch church members are among those who use these words and raise their eyebrows at the issues that prevail in America today: homosexuality and gay marriage, partial birth abortions and abortions in general, embryonic stem cell research, rights for everyone, including rights of atheists who contest “in God we trust”, hostility toward public display of the ten commandments (if not against the commandments themselves), hostility against declaring “Merry Christmas” and the public display of nativity scenes and hostility against prayer in schools.

These are but a few of the issues that trouble many Christians. The issues divide America politically and even threaten to polarize the Church as well. Hearing about the salary or severance or pension packages of some operatives of some corporations that run into millions of dollars per year, and seeing in the same town where those people work, the homeless, the uninsured, the unemployed, the run-down schools and the drug-addicted, tells us that America is as disparate economically as it can be. America remains one of the most cosmopolitan countries of the world, with immigrants settling in all the regions of the vast nation. American colleges and universities also remain among the more popular destination of international students, even though there are concerns about the condition of American elementary and secondary education. America is not retarded or deficient – neither in education nor in the Arts. But there are those who might well argue that this much learning and knowledge –

gnosis – feeds a new gnosticism, which in turn, feeds America’s problems. All of these markers prevailed in Asia-Minor. Like the residents of Asia-Minor, Americans travel widely: the tourism markets in the Caribbean and Mexico, and the cruise ships depend desperately on American patronage. Travel allows for cross-fertilization of cultures, sub-cultures, and it may even fan the fires of pluralism. The likeness between America, 2006, and Asia-Minor, circa 60, is beginning to show.

Peter’s Readers and Diasporic Caribbean Christians

For a time, it was widely held that the recipients of Peter’s letter were Jews. That conclusion fits with his addressing them as “aliens and strangers.” Over time that has changed, and many commentators have come to believe it is largely Gentile Christians to whom Peter wrote. Along the way, others have decided that we cannot say conclusively, one way or another. Peter H. Davids (*The First Epistle of Peter*) sees the letter’s recipients as Jews (67). He notes that the Jewish Christians who fled abroad from Palestine after the fall of Jerusalem, often referred to themselves as the “dispersion” or “diaspora.” Over time, this term became synonymous with the church altogether. He contends that in Peter we “find a natural transfer of one of the titles of Israel to the church” (46). Robert Paul Roth (*“First Peter”, Master Study Bible*), on the other hand, while claiming Peter’s audience as Jewish, notes that the letter was intended for circulation among Christians of predominantly Gentile heritage (1269). Both Eugene M.

Boring (*1 Peter*) and Ernest Best (*I Peter*) agree. Boring argues that while there were Jewish members in the churches, they (the churches) were comprised primarily of Gentile believers (43). Best also sees Gentile readers in the majority (13, 19).

There is a debate about this matter. Donald Miller (*On This Rock: A Commentary on First Peter*) discusses it extensively. He notes that there has been a fairly clear – and sustained – difference of opinion about whether the readers were Jewish or Gentile. Noting that there was a marked division about it on the part of the church fathers, he observes that the Greek fathers of the East held the readers to be Jews, while the Latin fathers of the West held them to be Gentiles. This division continued through the Reformation and remains until the present time (79). Miller suggests four reasons people might argue for Jewish readership: (1) the wide usage of Old Testament quotes, as in 2:4-10; (2) the word “dispersion”, which had come to be a synonym for Israel since the exile; (3) that the mention in 4:3 of the former lifestyle of sin is a reference to how badly these Jews may have lapsed from their normal religion to the extent that they now resembled Gentiles; (4) Peter, the apostle to the Jews (Galatians 2:7), may be expected to write to Jews rather than Gentiles (Miller 79-80).

On the other side of the argument, Miller notes that the use of the Old Testament (OT) may reflect the orientation of the writer, but not necessarily that

of the recipients. He adds that the OT is indispensable to the understanding of the Christian gospel. He reasons that the term “dispersion” may not be taken any more literally than Peter’s stated location of writing as “Babylon” (5:13) – considered a codename for Rome. Those who support a Gentile readership claim that 4:3-4 proves it. Looking at the reference, Miller notes that Gentiles would be more likely to find it strange that other Gentiles didn’t join in with them, rather than Jews. He further explores that if the readership were Jewish, the matter of slavery would never have arisen since few Jews ever had slaves or were slaves (80-81). Miller observes that Jews in Asia-Minor had already worked out a deal with government for Judaism to be tolerated. Had the Christians been predominantly Jewish, they may more readily have been accepted in Asia-Minor. Therefore the heavy discomfort and disapproval from the society to these Christians suggests that the majority of Christians in Asia-Minor were Gentiles.

Jobes brings a fresh perspective to the table (23ff). She cautions against the use of passages like 4:3-4 and 1:8 for basing a preference for Gentile readership. She warns that that these arguments may not be as plausible or compelling as they first seem. Referring to 1:19 she cites this context in Peter’s letter as redemption. She sees this as alluding to the ineffectual system in the old covenant, and judges Peter’s language to be comparative. She notes Paul’s reference to his former Jewish religion as garbage (Philippians 3:8). However, Jobes’ conclusion takes away any hint of disqualification in applying First Peter

to this problem: “Understood this way”, she says, “it makes little difference whether the original readers were Jews or Gentiles. Both spiritual systems were empty in that in themselves they offered no redemption, and both people groups were guilty in God’s sight” (24).

It seems fair to label Diasporic Caribbean Christians (DCC) as *twice* Gentiles – Gentiles in the literal sense and Gentiles in the sense of being aliens in the United States. This status (as aliens) is not only applied to them by the Immigration and Naturalization Services (INS) upon entry to the USA, but it is also characteristic of the experience of being an ethnic and people-groups minority in America. The Christian aliens of Asia-Minor received a message from Peter that remains a very relevant basis for a preaching ministry to the Caribbean Christians who are aliens in the USA.

Christians As Aliens

Miller is certain that

Peter’s clearly stated purpose...was to address the little Christian groups of Asia-Minor, who were living as strangers and aliens in a sea of paganism – misunderstood, insulted, socially ostracized, economically disadvantaged, and sometimes physically abused – by teaching them anew the meaning of their faith in Jesus Christ, and encouraging them to avail themselves of the resources of their Lord in remaining faithful to the end (86).

For Miller, Peter's broader purpose was to respond to how much Christians had to either resist or assimilate into the culture around them. For him, Peter was addressing the question about how Christianity might meaningfully affect the decadent cultures around it, without being "acculturated" into that culture (88-89).

It is believed that even though Peter appears to single out slaves, wives and husbands for special treatment and hortatory comments (2:18-3:7), he was using those categories of persons as a portal through which he would address the entire church. Boring concurs with this, affirming that the whole church, symbolically, was in a situation of slavery - disadvantage - in the society into which it was plunged (117-9). He contends that slaves in that society were presumed to be lazy liars and thieves, and were abused simply on that presumption. They did not become slaves by virtue of their race; they were made slaves instead, for a multiplicity of other reasons: they could have been sold to settle debts or they could have been born to slaves; they could have been human "booty" from military conquest. Given those circumstances, some slaves could be better educated than some masters! They were however without most rights, and were property more than persons. The slaves of Asia-Minor are models for Christian engagement in a hostile world today. Boring cites what he calls the paucity of a parallel in contemporary North America. Citing, instead, the response of Christians in East Germany during the days of the Iron Curtain,

he observes that the suffering is action, yet not a suffering to death. Diasporic Caribbean Christians, right here in the USA, might raise their eyebrows at Boring, thinking that their situation makes them a suitable parallel in America today!

Karen Jobes suggests that the Christians to whom Peter wrote were not indigenous to Asia-Minor, but were converted elsewhere, perhaps Rome, and then dispersed to Asia-Minor (1-2). She makes the observation that in modern society, few have experienced automatic demotion in social standing for simply being Christians. Few experience jeopardized livelihoods or lives. Many of the others, she contends, think that First Peter is for another church in another time – not our own! Not surprisingly then, she argues that, “the principles, upon which Peter offers his original readers consolation, encouragement and guidance in their specific situation, are applicable to all Christians at all times” (2). She continues,

First Peter encourages a transformed understanding of Christian self-identity that redefines how one is to live as a Christian in a world that is hostile to the basic principles of the gospel. Acknowledging that estrangement, Peter writes to those whom he addresses as ‘foreigners and resident aliens’ (2:11) within the society in which they lived. He holds up Jesus Christ as the true outsider, coming in to this world but being rejected and executed by it (3).

This is an extremely valuable insight, critical to the understanding of Jesus as the complete example for the aliens of Asia-Minor, and, by extension, to the Diasporic Caribbean Christians in North America. This leads to another matter.

Suffering As Aliens

The Christians in Asia-Minor, alien strangers in significant ways, suffered as a result of that identity. Diasporic Caribbean Christians (DCCs) in America suffer too. It is important to understand what kind of suffering the former encountered and endured so as to draw any kind of reasonable association with the sufferings of the latter.

Davids suggests that the idea of suffering is obscured in English. Citing the Concise Oxford Dictionary, he claims that, “the semantic field of the word is wide, including the experience of ‘pain, loss, grief, defeat, change, punishment, wrong, etc’” (30). He suggests that the church has traditionally treated all of these shades of suffering as one single group, and that since persecution and martyrdom are not part of regular Christian western experience, “we tend to focus on pain from illness or grief from death as the main examples” (30). Diasporic Caribbean Christians (DCC) may raise their collective eyebrows at this suggestion. The surprise may be prompted by their experience of suffering as aliens in a land where they are a minority grouping. The surprise may also come from their suffering the consequences of being descendants from slaves or

indentured laborers in the Caribbean. Even then, Davids may still have a point. Miller observes that the modern reader has no idea of the depth of embarrassment and shame that those Christians endured from civil authorities, the prejudiced and the hostile, for being Christians (320). While DCC in America might be able to claim a measure of suffering because they are an ethnic minority or a people-groups minority, they may not be able to substantiate a claim to any greater suffering *for being Christians*, than American Christians can². Davids (31) notes that it is only “*pascho*” and its cognates that appear in I Peter (which may explain the church’s proclivity, as Boring claims, to view suffering in a one-dimensional way). Davids traces the history of suffering in Scriptures, showing that in the Old Testament there was a relationship between suffering and sin, and that God was the “main agent” behind suffering, notwithstanding Satan’s appearance here and there in relation to it. However, when God sent or allowed suffering, it was for a purpose that would benefit the sufferer. He lingers awhile on the book of Job to substantiate this fact. Citing Luke 16:19-31 among other examples, he claims that the New Testament on the other hand, breaks what he calls “the sin-suffering equation of the Old Testament.” However, sin does bring suffering even to innocent ones – as in the case of Christ’s suffering. He espouses the view that the suffering that comes from illness is outside the scope of the meaning of the New Testament. The suffering of the New Testament, instead, is chiefly from persecution. He warns against reading into I Peter a meaning for

² See Member Questionnaire, question 12.

suffering that simply isn't there. Davids observes three classes of church members: (1) those who through compromise, avoided suffering; (2) those who reduced or avoided suffering by fleeing from it; and (3) those who were imprisoned or martyred after boldly confessing their faith (32-41). All this tells us is that the Asia-Minor Christians suffered; it does not yet tell us why they did or what kind of suffering it was. Alan Stibbs (*The First Epistle General of Peter*) suggests that the suffering mentioned in the four major passages are not necessarily the same kind (49-50). In 1:6-7, it is ordinary, temporal, "local and petty persecution" (troubles) that possibly may come. In 3:13-17, it is a consequence of simply being and doing good (righteousness). It is a suffering that is imminent, organized, and entrenched through state and official policy. 4:12-19 is considered to be a last-minute adjustment to the letter, already written, just before it is dispatched in response to a specific situation of suffering which also, is imminent. In 5:9, it is suffering at a spiritual level - of the devil - regardless of its manifestation in things natural. Stibbs appears to overlook 2:13-21 either as a legitimately additional "category" or as a part of one of the categories he does identify. He cautions against making too much of a distinction between these kinds of suffering. Of course, he is right. There appears to be no reason to think, for example, that the reference to the devil is a new source of suffering. It may well be that as Peter moves to the close of the letter, he locates the source of all the suffering, no matter how mild or hot, no

matter how entrenched or casual, in the devil. The distinctions Stibbs suggests, while possible, appear too wooden and improbable.

It might be assumed that because Asia-Minor was under Roman rule at the time of Peter's writing, the Christians suffered from Roman brutality and persecution. This may appear to be a reasonable assumption especially since the time of writing was very near to the time of the explosion of wickedness against Christians, starting with the great fire of Rome. Investigators are not convinced that the suffering in First Peter is from Roman cruelty. Many believe that the worst was yet to come. At Peter's writing, the worst of persecution – persecution as an empire-wide phenomenon – had not yet begun. Boring doubts that the persecutions to which Peter refers are mainly generated from Roman oppression. To assert that First Peter was written during “a time of distress and social harassment” is enough for him. He cites Pliny to support his doubt that the Christians faced Roman oppression (33). The suffering Peter addressed is “to distressed churches in Asia-Minor facing a difficult social situation” (43). Miller agrees. It was not Nero (AD 65) nor Domitian (AD 95) nor Trajan (AD 112) who was responsible for the suffering that Peter's readers endured (35). He – as does Boring – cites Pliny's letter which suggests that I Peter was written at a time when simply to be named “Christian” – especially when insisting on it after opportunities to recant – was a crime against the state (35, 44). E. M. Blaiklock (*First Peter: A Translation and Devotional Commentary*) weighs in on this also. For

him, the Christians' suffering clearly predates Roman persecution. He describes Peter as "a man of faith and prescience" who alone could sense the movement of Roman harassment towards Christians, even before he had any reason to imagine their specific and wickedest deeds (11-12). So if it was not Roman atrocities that brought on the suffering that the alien strangers of Asia-Minor encountered, what then, was it?

It was noted earlier that the slaves in Asia-Minor were presumed to be lazy liars and thieves, and were treated accordingly. In such a situation, insults, accusations and slurs abound. Add to the equation the understanding that slaves were considered property rather than people, and the result is unimaginable pressure – emotional terrorism, self-esteem problems, burgeoning embarrassment, relentless harassment – suffering. This was not only a socially motivated situation – it was also religiously motivated. Because the Christians refrained from the "flood of dissipation" into which their neighbors flung themselves, their abstinence was considered strange (4:4). The accusers did not stop at being surprised. They heaped abuses on the Christians, further accusing them of being better than them (the unbelievers). This is how these things go.

They accused them of a number of crimes, such as practicing murder, incest, and cannibalism in their secret church meetings (from expressions such as 'love feasts', 'brother and sister', 'eating the body', and 'drinking the blood', transferred to pagan contexts), and especially of disturbing the peace and good order of the Empire. Such slander was the common fare of public discourse and, when brought to

the attention of the authorities, became the basis for judicial persecution (Davids 97).

To read of this in a book is one thing. To watch it in a movie for a couple of hours raises emotions. To live in it from day to day has to be an ordeal – a “fiery” one! This demonstrates the fact that the suffering in Peter’s letter is specifically suffering at the hands and whims of others – one’s own neighbors. Fred B. Craddock (*First and Second Peter and Jude*) sees this as including “verbal abuse, social ostracism, painful rumors, charges of wrongdoing, anonymous pamphlets, hateful faces” (57). He notes the accusation of “atheist” flung on Christians because they refused to worship a plethora of Roman gods. This, in ripple effect, gave rise to a collection of other negative attitudes and presumptions about the Christians (57). Disagreeing with Stibbs (about there being, possibly, four different kinds of suffering in the letter), Craddock views “fiery ordeal” as not necessarily referring to a new spate or kind of suffering. Peter has already spoken of testing faith by fire (1:7). Because the time for that trial has now come, the believers should be ready, eliminating surprise. This then is not a new matter. In the subtle-looking phrase, “for the name of Christ” (4:14), Craddock believes that Peter is mentioning the nuance that refers to the Christians’ stubbornness in refusing to bow to Roman gods. This act of disobeying the Roman emperor, despite its recognition among Roman authorities as benign and part of a “foolish superstition”, repaid Christians with punishment (Craddock 72-73). In a recent episode of the T.V. reality show, “Wife

Swap”,³ the wife of a pastor exchanged homes with the wife of an atheist. She claimed that whenever in conversation with strangers, she usually employs a “neutral” phrase to describe the line of work her husband does so as to disarm her listeners and allow the conversation not to become unnecessarily charged with or directed by defensiveness. When her atheist reality-TV “husband” asked what her husband does, she simply told him that her (real) husband helps people in the community. As he probed and as the conversation grew, she revealed that her husband was a pastor. The ease with which the atheist declared, “a true Christian would have declared that up front” was as remarkable as it was funny. He was unaware (and probably unconcerned) about the value of her motive for “soft selling” her husband’s profession. This demonstrates the ease with which people who want to cast aspersions on Christians, can do it. In the reality show, this “couple” had “reality” hell for two weeks. In real life, this could be real hell!

The suffering to which Peter refers, according to Boring,

...was a matter of discrimination, ostracism, verbal abuse and harassment, employment and commercial disadvantages, and suspicions that could lead to accusations before unfriendly courts. All these are real possibilities at any time for the readers, similar to the situation of racial and ethnic minorities in many modern contexts” (131).

³ This is an ABC Network program in which, each episode, two wives from contrasting families exchange homes for two weeks. In the first week they have to live with the rules by which their counterpart usually runs their home. In the second week, they get to impose their own rules on their “new” family. The “entertainment” is in watching the relationship dynamics between the husbands and children in each family with their “new” wife-mother. The episode in question aired June 12, 2006.

From all of this, then, it becomes clear that the suffering that the Asia-Minor Christians encountered was related to their identity as Christians and, by extension, their Christian behavior. This includes the Lord's Supper and Christian terminology and language. They suffered because of their status as social misfits, for being perceived as antisocial, and for refusing to participate in what was considered commonplace and accepted entertainment and religious expressions in Asia-Minor. All of this led to misrepresentation, misconstruction, misunderstanding, accusations, harassment, prejudice and taunts. One look at them and one could tell that these "strange" people did not belong where they were. They were aliens, having regard to their faith and their identity. They were not aliens because they suffered. They suffered because they were aliens.

It is one thing to suffer for simply being different. It is another thing to suggest that that suffering be endured rather than resisted or contested! Peter counseled his readers to endure suffering. Their response to the ill treatment is not to demand to receive their rights but instead, to endure suffering! This has very strong implications for issues like human rights, civil liberties and civil rights. It raises questions that are deeply disturbing. For example, what judgment would Peter's challenge to the Asia-Minor Christians bring upon the – albeit non-violent – quest for civil rights in the United States in the 1960s? Does it mean that in today's America, human rights or constitutional rights are not to be demanded? True, the slaves to whom Peter wrote were property, not people!

True, wives were their husbands' property, not their partners. True, property cannot ask for anything. True, in our times, people are regarded as people, even where sleazy sweatshops or child labor is cultivated. But one is still unsure whether this is a sufficient premise from which to answer those questions. Nevertheless, it suggests to Diasporic Caribbean Christians that regardless of whatever else they may be involved in, their energies in the United States should be aimed more at pleasing and following the example of Jesus Christ, than at patently political pursuits. Boring appears to suggest that this matter of enduring suffering is the theme of First Peter. He warns, however, that, "subordination does not mean blind obedience, but rather finding and responsibly exercising one's proper role within a given social structure" (114). At the beginning of his book, Boring asks, "How many Christians live faithfully in a non-Christian society that misunderstands and abuses them?" (19). Diasporic Caribbean Christians must not forget that there appears to be a measure of subversion in the act of suffering for doing good, and that that is more powerful than other responses to suffering that are preferred today.

Peter is abundantly clear that the motivation for enduring suffering is faith in Jesus Christ, and the desire to follow his example (1:7-8; 2:4-12; 21-25; 3:13-18; 4:12-19). Boring warns that, according to 2:18-25, the Christian doesn't just imitate the sufferings of Christ, but the Christian also participates in them (129, 142). In this context, the suffering takes on a new dimension. It was

mentioned before that it is one thing to suffer, and another thing to be required to endure suffering. But further, it is another thing to be *joyful* in enduring suffering. Boring helps to promote a better understanding of this. He notes 6 affirmations of the fact that unjust suffering is not only to be endured by Christians, but also becomes the context for a joyful Christian life: (1) suffering inheres in the calling to be Christian (4:12a); (2) suffering as a test refines the faith (4:12b); (3) Christians' unjust suffering is viewed from within their life in Christ (4:13); (4) eschatological glory already belongs to the suffering Christian community, even while they suffer (4:14); (5) eschatological judgment (not only the glory as just mentioned) already rests on the suffering Christian community while they suffer (4:17-18); (6) finally, as seen in 4:17, 19, suffering as a Christian has a place in God's eschatological plan (154-161).

At the mention of suffering as part of an eschatological plan, it is difficult to overlook 5:8-10, in which suffering and the devil are mentioned together in a cause-effect relationship, and in which an eschatological plan is alluded to (vs. 10).

The distress in which the Christians of Asia-Minor find themselves is not merely a matter of a conflict of lifestyles or different cultural understandings...Rather, the readers are caught up in the eschatological conflict between God and the suprapersonal power of evil, a battle of which the outcome cannot be in doubt, since the decisive encounter has already occurred...The devil *must* be resisted precisely because he is already defeated... (Boring 176).

Best asserts that though the writer places in evidence that the devil had come to be seen as a personality responsible for suffering, evil and persecutions, “he does not discuss the difficult theological and philosophical problems that arise” (174). While that is true, Peter doesn’t need to, and Craddock would probably agree. According to him, Peter mentions the devil so as to personify and magnify the problem of suffering. Peter links the harassment in the social arena with the spiritual arena. This demonstrates the danger of losing in the spiritual arena, if one were to succumb to the suffering in the social arena (78). The mention of the devil therefore, is no foray into the esoteric or nebulous, but a clearly defined understanding of the problem the Asia-Minor Christians faced! Diasporic Caribbean Christians in America should take note. It is easy to blame everything on America or on one’s status. Not so, warns Peter. Indeed, it will also be a mistake to read what Peter didn’t write: that is, to blame everything on the devil!

In First Peter it is difficult to overlook the imperative to suffer. It doesn’t become an imperative merely (or basely) because of the danger of loss in the spiritual arena, according to Craddock. Far better, suffering is an imperative because it is the context for a joyful Christian life (as Boring says, above). Whichever end of the spectrum one accepts, there is a purpose and reason behind suffering. This notion paves the way for the next major observation about First Peter that lays groundwork for addressing preaching to Diasporic Caribbean Christians.

Aliens, But Missionaries

There can be no doubt that, whether as a sub-text or as a sub-theme or as a clearly intended goal, mission is included in Peter's list of challenges. A careful look at the issue of suffering communicates that its purpose is subversive in nature. Through it, Christ, though rejected as a stone, became the capstone (2:7), thereby building a spiritual house, a royal priesthood, a holy nation and a vast people (2:10). Through it, he has produced a huge flock to which he is Overseer (2:25). Through suffering, Christ brings the world to God (3:18); through it, he accomplished a strange and supernatural ministry (3:19). And through suffering, Christ left an example for Christians to continue what he had started through *his* suffering: mission. Boring, in treating 2:11-3:12 as a single unit, sees mission at the heart of it. He observes the slaves and wives, by becoming Christians, had identified with a new and suspect grouping that their predecessors had never known and would probably never countenance. He views this as a display of courage, demonstrating social protest rather than submission. He argues that they are "*not submissive*" (emphasis, his) and that, "the text does not merely command docility, submission, and obedience, but sub-ordination" (108). On the same page, he claims again that, "mission, not sub-mission, is the focus of this text." The burden of these Christians was to bear witness to the unbelieving outsiders to their faith, so that they too might believe. This includes the unbelieving masters and unbelieving husbands.

The 'doing good' (in 2:15) here called for...is not mere personal piety, but an active missionary role...that will eventuate in their present detractors not only changing their minds about the Christians, but glorifying God. 'Doing good' here means right conduct as judged by the norm of the Christian mission 'doing right'" (Boring 114).

Similarly, the wives who Peter addresses are given a missionary mandate regarding their unbelieving husbands. The missionary implications for the entire Christian community cannot be overlooked when it is remembered that this passage is addressed to the whole church! Turning to the husbands who have the dominant role in the patriarchal society, Peter's aim is not to encourage them to exploit that, but to be "considerate" (NIV) or, to treat their wives according to "gnosis." What this translates into is that Christian husbands' behavior should not conform to social expectations (as the advantaged ones) but it should reflect the transformation that comes from their knowledge of Christ. This too, has missionary value by way of demonstrating to unbelievers something about the real seat (and meaning) of power, authority and love. Again, Boring concurs: "While the social structure itself is not challenged, the husbands are instructed to live with their wives no longer merely in terms of cultural expectations but "according to knowledge" (126-7). These men, by virtue of their conversion, now know that their wives are not their property. This new knowledge now affecting their conscience gives them a missionary edge even as aliens in the community. Christians in general, while not condoning the social structure or social order, should accept it and fit in. This is

Peter's message. This has implications for how Diasporic Caribbean Christians should view themselves in the United States, what their agenda should be, and what the focus of a preaching ministry to them should be. This all appears to be missionary in nature. Miller also considers the burden of this passage as missionary in nature (236).

Christian Community In Diaspora

An aim of the missionary imperative is to build community or expand it. There is a theme of community in First Peter. It is clear that he desires that the diasporic Christians there forge a strong and supportive community in the name of Christ. There is among the Asia-Minor believers, a need for community – one with clearly identified values, and with clear spiritual traits and identification marks.

If only because they were ostracized from the prevailing and wider community, Peter's readers needed community. In Asia-Minor, Boring notes, "religion did not belong to the privatized sphere of individual lives, but was an integral aspect of the life of the community" (103). Rituals of one kind or another riddled every aspect of community life. Interestingly, this is slightly reminiscent of religion in the Caribbean – whether it is Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Rastafari or other. There, most public holidays have religious parentage; some devotees are easily identifiable by their dress codes, hairstyles, the color of their

buildings, the collection of flags they fly in their yards and other markers. In Asia-Minor, given the extent and nature of the rituals, these Christians could not participate in the prevailing religion, though they were expected to (4:3-4). They had to distance themselves from that. Consequently they were also seen to be distancing or divorcing themselves from the community, and became liable to accusations that they were antisocial or unpatriotic, at best, or atheistic, at worst (Boring 103). This is probably where the aliens felt alienation at its worst. So in 2:11-17, Peter gives them “a new social code” to enable them to live in these austere circumstances. Miller agrees that, in this section of his letter, “(Peter) moves on now to deal with the nature of *corporate* growth within the Christian group. Maturing individuals are members of a body the whole of which is to develop into a well coordinated and effectually functioning community” (185).

This challenges the individualism that has overrun current American theology in some circles, where there is an emphasis on “my” blessing, where there is a preponderance of “worship songs” that use the first person singular rather than plural. Because of their proximity to the US, many Caribbean Christians, by the time they migrate to America, have already developed a penchant for this kind of theology, due to religious broadcasting from the US available through satellite T.V. This is a reason for both Diasporic Caribbean Christians and American Christians to revisit First Peter.

Peter uses pictures that demonstrate the kind of integrative community he expects the believers to engage in. Indeed, they do not create that community – they have been made to be that community (2:9-10). They are not, intrinsically, living stones, but because they are joined to Christ, this is what they become. They are living stones, joined together with a capstone at the heart and base of the building they become. More than a building – they are a spiritual house. They are a royal priesthood, suggesting common engagement in service, with the necessary coordination and integration that Israel knew in the Levitical priesthood. They would have recalled that the Levitical priesthood through its service, facilitated and maintained Israel as a community – worshiping and otherwise. Though they are outcasts – disqualified and disowned – they are a nation-community, right there in the midst of the people that disown them.

Peter again addresses the matter of community in 4:8-11, elaborating on the lifestyle he has already enjoined earlier. In Asia-Minor the Christians had no one but themselves with whom to forge this community. In the present age, however, Caribbean aliens in America will find Christians there already. A case can therefore be made for Diasporic Caribbean Christians (DCC) in America and the churches they join there, to build community together, on the pillars that Craddock suggests are in this passage: (1) a disciplined life of prayer (vs.7); (2) turning toward each other in mutual love (vs.8); (3) practicing hospitality (“literally ‘love of strangers’”) toward each other; (4) using the gifts (vv.11-12)

God has given one for the service of all (68-69). The idea of the DCC joining with American churches is deliberate. While the establishment of Caribbean ethnic churches in America is not to be ruled out or prevented simply for the sake of preventing it, there is clearly, here, a challenge to integration. A serious reading of First Peter could not prompt anyone to advocate for or even justify, a church that is of Caribbean immigrants only. That would have to come for other reasons. The thrust of Peter's letter would advocate strongly, today, for an integrated church, meaning all believers, regardless of ethnicity, joining together in one community. The Christians were advised how to live faithfully in the midst of the situations that alienated and troubled them. They weren't advised how to leave or escape. Peter's message is about relating to the world, rather than seeking to be apart from it. This addresses the idea of multi-culturalism and rejects the idea of diaspora as meaning "sectarian withdrawal from the world" (Smith-Christopher 13). It is the world that rejects and alienates the church; not the church the world. "Slandered or persecuted Christians are not to withdraw into a ghetto" (Best 111). Much more, the church should not reject the church.

After a brief look at the kind of integrity, values, attitudes and leadership that should attend this community (5:1-7), Peter mentions community one last time in 5:9, referring to a worldwide community of people who suffer for the name of Christ. It is significant that this is couched in an eschatological framework (5:10-11), allowing him to end the letter on the same eschatological

note on which he began (1:5). The community of God is inseparably bound up with a “Christological eschatology.” It is on this note, unlike any other in the entire letter, that Diasporic Caribbean Christians of America discover that they are bound together with the Christian aliens of Asia-Minor.

The Theology of First Peter

Eschatological concerns permeate Peter’s letter (1:5; 20; 2:12; 4:7; 13-14; 5:4; 10). The letter also displays a Christology where Christ is not just Lord, but where it is clear that what he has done and is doing is all very deliberate, planned and fully under his control (1:2-3; 18-20; 2:4-8; 2:21-25; 3:18-4:1; 5:4; 6-11). Bound up completely in that Christology is a soteriology that Peter wants his readers, from the outset, to understand includes them (1:3-5; 10-12; 18-19; 21; 2:21-25). Indeed, the entire letter is an attempt to engage the readers in working out their salvation in their circumstances in view of the person and work of Jesus Christ. It is not surprising that Peter’s major themes all feed back into the Christology, the eschatology and the soteriology he outlines in this letter. The Christians in Asia-Minor may be aliens there, but, through their salvation in Christ, they now belong to an eschatological and missionary community in which alone, their temporary suffering makes sense. So their identity, their suffering, and the purpose of their suffering are all bound up in a seamless tapestry with who Christ is, what they have become in him and what this will all mean in the end.

Dauids finds an overarching eschatological theme in First Peter, accompanied by what he calls a “temporal apocalyptic” (3:18-22; 4:12-19 for example) and a “spatial apocalyptic” (1:4, 12, 3:19-22; 5:8ff).⁴ Apart from noting also the theme of soteriology, he sees a theme of holiness (personal, social and communal), a theme of hope, community, relationship to the world, pictures of the Trinity and, of course, the problem of suffering (15-23). Miller also finds a strong Christology in I Peter and an “understanding” (not “doctrine”) of the Trinity (1:3). He notes other teachings Peter visits as including the Holy Spirit (1:2), redemption (1:18; 2:24; 3:18), and (as in 5:1) the Church and ministry (47-55).

Homiletical Observations About First Peter

First Peter is a letter. Still, a significant portion of the letter is hortatory in nature (2:11 straight through to 5:9 with a few exceptions in between). The letter makes for easy reading, because it makes for easy reasoning. It makes for easy reasoning because it makes a connection with real people with real needs. If Peter could make this kind of connecting appeal to people he has likely never met (indeed, to people like us, millennia later), how much more of a connection might he be expected to have, had he been seeing his listeners face to face? The answer is not far away. Peter, rising to the occasion on Pentecost Day, preaches

⁴ See also, Boring, p.176

in such a way that makes such a connection, that three thousand people convert, right there, on the spot after palpable and powerful conviction (Acts 2:14-41). Peter uses a variety of methods to encourage his readers to become established in the faith: declaration, proclamation, testimony, attestation, teaching, exhortation, entreaty, stimulation, encouragement, and comfort. In this, Miller sees a clear linkage between Peter's letter and his sermon at Pentecost (86). Craddock observes, in fact, that some question the epistolary nature of First Peter (12). These questions arise, presumably because its liturgical and homiletical contents are above the average expected in a letter. He affirms that, "this letter represents the teaching and preaching of Simon Peter and extends that ministry into Asia-Minor" (Craddock 13).

It cannot be denied that First Peter is homiletic in structure and certainly in technique. If Peter could be this noticeably homiletical while writing to people he has likely never met, how much more homiletically authoritative should one who knows his or her listeners face to face be in preaching these values and lessons today? The astute preacher can take the Diasporic Caribbean Christian experience and "reconfigure", "reinterpret", "reorganize" and "reimagine" it (Brueggemann 24-34), in the light of First Peter. Peter has supplied sufficient material to make this not just possible, but necessary. In doing so, a model for all Christians for living the temporary life in the contemporary world might be created, since all Christians are strangers and

pilgrims in the world. First Peter needs to be preached now in America as it needed to be written then to Asia-Minor. Alan Stibbs writes:

When moral standards in so-called Christian countries tend seriously to decline, and when genuine young converts to Christ are tempted to spend their enthusiasm more in words than in deeds we need the challenge of I Peter to express our response to Christ and the gospel in transformed behaviour in relation to our fellow-men (11).

Peter's world and First Peter's theology, though so far removed from today's world and theology, at least chronologically, appear to hit close to home. The letter may be applied to many contemporary realities. From all the foregoing, in relation to the broader matter of preaching to Diasporic Caribbean Christians, a case can be made from First Peter for the following:

1. Diasporic Caribbean Christian *Identity*, in which the social, religious and spiritual and theological status of the DCC should be explored;
2. Diasporic Caribbean Christian *Suffering*, in which the types of suffering, the ways of suffering, and the reasons for suffering among DCC should be assessed;
3. Diasporic Caribbean Christian *Mission*, in which the call to mission, the targets, types and methods of mission of the DCC should be evaluated;
4. Diasporic Caribbean Christian *Community*, in which the ramifications of this community should explored; and

5. Diasporic Caribbean Christian *Leadership*, in which the kind of leadership, generated by Diasporic Caribbean communities, should be probed.

A couple of sub-themes – Diasporic Caribbean Christian *Integrity* and Diasporic Caribbean Christian *Hope* – should be examined under a couple of those already named.

The goal of this study is to contribute to preaching to Diasporic Caribbean Christians. In addition to the five matters immediately above, a series of sermons can be generated from Peter's letter. Studying First Peter with DCC in mind guides one to a selection of passages that have the potential to produce sermons that would exercise the minds, hearts and lives of not only the hearers, but the preachers also. These sermons will be developed fully in a section of a book that will be the end product of this thesis-project. Here, the specific exegetical groundwork for those sermons is laid, each followed by the embryonic historical outline of the passage, en route to a sermon.

PASSAGE ONE

I Peter 1:1-7

The Study/Exegesis

1. **vs. 1** The recipients are clearly defined as chosen sojourners in diaspora. Whoever they are, whether ethnic aliens or strangers, they clearly do not belong

where they are, except for the fact that they are “chosen”; and if chosen by God, there is a sense in which they belong anywhere he allows them to be.

2. **vs. 3** There is new hope for Peter’s readers, as well as for Diasporic Caribbean Christians, because of Christ’s resurrection/provision, even though they are aliens or disadvantaged socially, economically or otherwise.

3. **vs. 4-5** There is not only hope, but there is also an “inheritance”! Neither slave masters nor colonial masters might have left them any inheritance. Cycles of poverty may have disallowed forefathers to leave them any; and though it may be economic limitations that have led to the status as aliens in another country, they find that here, they have an inheritance! This inheritance is indestructible on several levels, and to top that, it is kept in the stronghold of heaven. More, than *that*: the people themselves are kept by God, and shielded by his power through this temporal life, until the fullness of salvation comes.

4. **vs. 6** They can “greatly” rejoice (despite their many sorrows, concerns, disadvantages, which DCC-aliens know well).

5. **vs. 7** However, these sorrows, concerns, disadvantages – suffering grief and trials – are purposeful in the economy of God: they have come so that they might assess their faith as being extremely valuable. Genuine gold is proven only by enduring the fire that burns away all alloys and impurities. In the same way genuine faith, worth more than gold and not perishable as gold is, has to pass through this “fiery test” so as to be proven genuine, strong and admirable.

En route to a Sermon: The Historical Outline

1. Peter's readers are second-class citizens – aliens and strangers in foreign territory (vs. 1).
2. Even though they are this, all is not lost: they have new hope and a special inheritance in Jesus Christ (vs. 3-5).
3. These gifts enable them to rejoice greatly despite the treatment that may arise from their status (vs. 6).
4. This treatment is necessary so as to prove their faith as genuine (vs. 7).

PASSAGE TWO

I Peter 1:13-22

The Study/Exegesis

1. **vs. 13** After divulging some ramifications about this salvation in Jesus (which he mentions in verses 7 and 9), Peter says “therefore”, meaning this: because this salvation is so special, action is required from the readers – they should prepare their minds for action and be self-controlled. The disadvantageous situation where his readers are judged for their status rather than for their value can prompt emotional looseness. However since this salvation they have is something that the angels long to look into (vs. 12) Peter's readers, instead of venting emotionally or sinning, can set their hope *fully* on the grace they already have which is given when Jesus is revealed.

2. **vs. 14** Peter brings this (the exegesis of vs. 13) out in vs. 14, warning these pressured readers not to sin by conforming to those desires they knew before their salvation. Scholars have already suggested that this verse can be taken to mean the ignorance of sinfulness in general, rather than as a reference to Jews in their religion prior to Christ (though that is not inconceivable).

3. **vs. 15-17** Instead of choosing the path of sin, they are to be holy, in keeping with the Lord's example and nature. Since Peter says that they call on a Father who judges each man's work *impartially*, he appears to be contrasting that reality with the prejudicial environment and people with which and whom they have to deal. Since they are related to God (he is their Father) they are to live reverently – *as strangers*. If they are strangers, and if God is their Father, then God – and his Son, Jesus – are strangers too!

4. **vs. 18-19** Why should these believers behave sinfully (presumably after the flesh) or cheaply when they have been redeemed by non-cheap or non-fleshly (perishable) things? Instead, since they were redeemed by something more precious than that – even more precious than gold: the blood of Christ – they should more so be prompted to be holy and reverent. The fruitless way of life from which they have been redeemed might well include Judaism (since to have faith in the law when salvation by faith [Genesis 15:6, Galatians 3:6] was already available, was truly empty and fruitless). Scholars should not think it beyond Peter to raise this reasoning to Jews (if his readers were primarily Jews).

5. **vs.20-21** Peter briefly discusses the work of Jesus. In two sentences, he describes Jesus' work as creation, revelation, salvation ("through him you believe in God") and confirmation ("your faith and hope are in God").

6. **vs. 22** It is only when we engage ourselves in holiness that we are able to love others and create or build community! This is of cardinal importance for a diasporic community!

En route to a Sermon: The Historical Outline

1. The Asia-Minor Christians, though under pressure, should not live the lifestyles of the past (vs. 14).
2. The Asia-Minor Christians should, instead, live holy lives (vs. 13, 15-19).
3. This lifestyle is necessary so as to fulfill of Christ's work for and in them (vs. 20-22).

PASSAGE THREE I Peter 2:1-11

The Study/Exegesis

1. **vs. 1** "Therefore" refers to the argument that Peter was making previously. The believers now living their lives on a different plane (1:18-23) have been challenged to live lives with a holiness that is evidently from that higher plane. Because their lives are now characterized by holiness (from the higher plane) they are to "rid themselves" (2:1) of everything from the lower plane that is

sinful. They should get rid of anything that communicates the opposite of who they really are. They are Christians, specially chosen by God (1:1ff). They have a hope and an inheritance in heaven (1:3ff). They have a salvation that the angels long to look into (1:12). They no longer live in the ignorance of their former sinfulness (1:14). They are to emulate the one who redeemed them with a precious price/salvation/person (1:13ff). Therefore, malice, deceit, hypocrisy, envy, slander and the like are all representative of the former life, not the present salvation and election, even though they are exposed fully, to the “oldness” and coldness of that sin in the treatment they receive in their environment.

2. **vs. 2-3** Could Peter be playing on words if not an idea? These people have tasted the ill-treatment, the suspicions, the prejudices, the slander and hypocrisy of the people who make them suffer (1:6). If that were all they had tasted, not only would it be a hopeless scenario, it might even be reasonable to expect them to retaliate or defend themselves in some way! But they have also tasted of the Lord (vs. 3) and that he is good (in contrast to those who are bad)! So what they are to crave is not the weapons of retaliation, in order to manage in life.

3. **vs. 4** Presumably, as the believers keep on tasting of the Lord or as they crave (and come to drink) the spiritual milk, they would “come to Jesus.” So here in this verse, “as (they) come to him” they are coming to one who is (a) a living Stone, (b) rejected by men, (c) chosen by God, (d) precious to him. Without mentioning it expressly, Peter appears to be showing the closeness and likeness between his readers and their Lord. While he clearly mentions that they too are

(a) living stones, it is clear that they also are (b) rejected by men (aliens, strangers, sufferers!), (c) chosen by God (elect – 1:1; shielded – 1:5; called – 1:15;), and (d) precious to him (the reasoning behind 1:18-19 – if they are redeemed with something precious, then that which is redeemed is as precious in cost if not in value).

4. **vs. 5** These alien strangers in diaspora are, in every description just offered, just like their Lord. The importance of verse 5 should not be lost on them. They who are now slaves, nobodies and second-class citizens, are being built into an edifice, a structure, to be middlemen, second to God (which is what priests are, in terms of placement of access to God and interceding to God for others). Is it their sufferings, or their suffering *selves* that Peter intends his readers to interpret as the spiritual sacrifice that they offer to God through Jesus Christ?

5. **vs. 6-8** Peter quotes from Isaiah 28:16, Psalm 118:22 and Isaiah 8:14 to make his point that this is a scripturally grounded truism, picture and prophecy. In stating this, he isolates the importance of trusting in this “Stone”, and, conversely, the fall of those who don’t trust the “Stone.” What follows the “but” in the following verse might suggest that those who don’t trust not only stumble and fall, but *they* are the nobodies, who are in deep, deep trouble (when contrasted with those who trust according to verses 9-10).

6. **vs. 9** This is one of the most significant affirmations that alien, diasporic strangers can hear: that (a) they are *a* chosen people (despite being *scattered* they are “*a*” unit); that (b) they are not just a holy priesthood (as in vs. 5) but a *royal*

priesthood. “Royal” has to be a reference to the priests, rather than God whom they represent (there isn’t a multiplicity or variety of Gods, and the only God is already known as King). So they are not an ordinary priesthood; (c) they are not just a people, but more organized than that, they are a holy nation. This means that though scattered, they are one, and though unclaimed, they are God’s – as clearly stated in (d) “a people belonging to God.” There is a clearly stated purpose for which they have been made thus – and it appears to be missionary (which Peter picks up more clearly in the next thought-section).

7. **vs. 10** Peter rounds this section off by recalling where his readers were coming from, given where and who they are now: once upon a time, nobodies, now God’s “somebodies”; once upon a time written off, condemned, without mercy, now with it. Admittedly, this phrase seems more congruent with a Gentile, rather than Jewish, readership. (It demonstrates the difficulty and the continuing uncertainty attending the identity of Peter’s recipients.)

8. **vs. 11** Traditionally every translation breaks at verse 10, but this study will carry it to 11 since it seems to complete the thought started in 2:1, by way of restatement. (It also serves the purpose of introducing the next major section that begins in verse 12.)

En route to a Sermon: The Historical Outline

1. Peter’s readers should live by a new standard instead of the old (2:1-3, 11).
2. They *can* live this way because they are like Jesus in so many ways (2:4-8).

3. They *should* live this way because their new identity demands it – they have been transformed to a new identity, making them strangers to the world (2:9-11).

PASSAGE FOUR

2:11-3:7

The Study/Exegesis

1. **vs. 11-12** If they are aliens and strangers in the world, if nobody knows them, who cares whether these Christians abstained from sinful desires or not? Who cares whether they behaved badly or not? To whom do they have to be responsible or report? It is to their Lord! This new life is a dual responsibility: at once to their Lord (on whom they pattern their behavior) and to the community, from a *missionary* perspective! Verse 12 brings out that missionary perspective: they should live righteously in the presence of the “pagans” so that (a) the pagans may see these works as good – despite their opinions or accusations, and (b) they (the pagans) may glorify God. This runs close to Jesus’ word in Matt. 5:16.⁵ But in what specific ways may these Christians live exemplary lives and thus fulfill a mission to be a “light to the Gentiles”? Peter answers in the following verses.

⁵ It is remarkable that the NIV does not include the reference to Matthew 5:16 in the reference column, despite the very clear commonality between these two verses!

2. **vs. 13-17** (a) They are to submit themselves to *every* authority: king, governors or their agents, even though they are aliens (**vs. 13-14** – and in vs. 18 he will add that this submission is expected whether these authorities were kind or not). The idea here is that though they may be labeled aliens, and though they may not share the same social values or behavior of their neighbors, they are not just to respect, but submit to, the law of the government where they live. The primary reason this is enjoined is that they may silence the false accusers (**vs. 15**) who have been foolishly and ignorantly ranting and slandering them as anti-social, outsiders, aliens and misfits. Note that *it is God's will* for them to submit to this! (Further, it certainly is what Christ did when he, though God, entered the world in human form – 2:23!) They are not losing their freedom when they submit (**vs. 16**); in fact, they need to guard against *abusing* their freedom! The suggestion is that they were free enough (with implications that “slaves” were not as “un-free” as meets the eye). (b) They are to live this life of submission and responsibility to the state in the context of being servants of God – it is *God* they are serving, not the authorities. This is the perspective they need. (c) They are encouraged to show proper respect to everyone, to love the community of believers, to fear God and to honor the king. This is a comprehensive list of all the essential community relationships in which they are expected to participate.

3. **vs. 18** These slaves were domestic household workers. They were property, yes, but they were still afforded much more dignity and freedoms than anything known to the slave trade and system of the 18th-19th century. Whether this

section is intended only for these persons or for the entire church, the message is clear: that even though they are all in a situation where they are not in control or in charge, they can, via their submission (“sub-mission” according to Boring), be “subversive” and accomplish the mission of silencing foolish and ignorant people (vs. 15)! These slaves were to (a) submit with “all” respect to their masters (b) submit regardless of the temperament of the master or the treatment suffered from them – again, in the name of silencing critics and accomplishing the God-willed mission before them!

4. **vs. 19-20** Peter introduces here, the catalyst by which he would promote further the basis of this mission that God has required of these believers. Suffering when you do not deserve it, and when you do it “conscious of God” is commendable and admirable. (“Conscious of God” may mean awareness that God is in control, awareness that God has willed this to happen, and awareness that the sufferer is doing this not for himself or the wicked oppressor, but as a servant of God - vs. 16.) The rhetorical question is set up: what good is it to suffer deservedly? On the other hand, it is commendable to suffer unjustly (before God) and endure it! (“Commendable”, both vs. 19 and 20 is “*charis*” – grace.)

5. **vs. 21** Now Peter is ready for the segue that he has perfectly set up: he can now claim two things in relation to enduring unjust, undeserved suffering: (1) it is a calling – the idea of mission is raised squarely again! (2) it is an example left by Jesus for us to follow. The following are clear: (a) Christ suffered (vs. 21); (b)

he suffered unjustly (vs. 22); Christ embodies and demonstrates the harmlessness, integrity and difference of lifestyle required of them in vs. 1, 11-12 (vs. 22-23): no sin in his mouth, no retaliation, no threats, no demanding his rights. Instead he entrusts (commends?) himself to God; (c) the implication could be lost neither on Peter nor his readers that this Jesus was an alien himself, which is *precisely why* he was misunderstood, slandered and made to suffer! It could not be lost on Peter, who, himself, by identifying his location as “Babylon” (5:13), designates himself an alien as well.

6. **vs. 25** This verse appears to be properly placed only when the understanding is held that mission is at the heart of this section. The meaning then is that, as Christ’s unjust suffering led to the safe homecoming of formerly straying sheep to the “Shepherd and Overseer of their souls”, so too their unjust suffering where they are in pagan territory is the act of mission that God intends to use (vs. 12, 15) to bring *these* straying sheep home!

7. **3:1** It could be that “in the same way” (NIV) has two meanings. (1) “In the same way” that Christ suffered unjustly and so brought straying sheep home, and in the same way that all the Christian aliens should endure unjust suffering so as to bring the pagan sheep home (and so glorify God – 2:12, 15), so too in the same way, the wives who have unbelieving husbands need to see the missional (missionary), even subversive, power they have, to enable them to bring these straying sheep to Christ! This makes sense when it is remembered that Peter’s letter had no chapters and verses. 3:1 is completely bound up with 2:25, as 2:25 is

bound up with 2:12-24. (2) “In the same way” that slaves were the property of their masters, so wives were the property of their husbands. In the same way that slaves should remain in submission to their masters despite any ill treatment, so wives were to submit to their unbelieving husbands, even if the latter were incapable of the challenge in verse 7. In the same way that submissive slaves would silence critics and glorify God (missionally and evangelistically, no doubt – 2:15), so submissive wives would also “silence” the criticism of unbelief in their husbands, while winning them over to faith in Christ. The burden of this verse is submission in the name of mission! Peter uses the word “may”, indicating possibility, not guarantee. Yet, his use of “*hina*” – “in order that” – suggests purposeful divine reasoning and will. The irony of the scenario Peter raises is not to be lost: that men who do not believe the word might be captured to the word without a word! If ever there was subversion, this is it!

8. **vs. 2** When compared to and coupled with 2:12, it becomes clear that Peter is considering this strategy not as a passing possibility, but as deliberate mission. It is witness and mission that speak louder than words to efficaciously bring “pagans” to faith.

9. **vs. 3-4** This is standard information, given the clear contrast already made between the spiritual nature of the readers and their “pagan” environment; between their temporal dwelling place-reality and the place where their inheritance is being kept (1:4); between the lifestyle they are to shun and the one

they are to adopt (1:13-15; 2:1-3; 11-12). If this section is considered as addressed to the whole church, then the idea/meaning is that these believers need to be careful of the measure of trust they place in material and natural factors so as to accomplish spiritual objectives. Specifically it addresses the confidence, focus and preoccupation that many have in outward appearances. Because of this, they fail to cultivate the inner beauty that the Spirit uses, which “is of great worth in God’s sight.”

10. **vs. 5-6** Peter references the assertion he just made, simply grounding it in tradition, Scriptures and spiritual heredity.

11. **vs. 7** Again, this “in the same way” means this: Christ was God in flesh. Yet, he suffered himself to be ill-treated, by submitting himself to sinful human authorities – people subordinate to him! “In the same way” saved husbands are in advantageous positions. Their wives, in relation to them, are “weaker” (in the sense of their being the property of their husbands). In that society, these husbands had a right to treat their wives as lower “subjects.” Yet, the imperative of the mission in their salvation is that they submit, not to their wives primarily, but to the mission that is wrapped up in the new knowledge in salvation (hence, *kata gnósin* – “according to knowledge”, or “consideration”). This would result in considerate treatment and respect for the wives as heirs of their (Christian) husbands’ new freedom in this grace they share.

En route to a Sermon: The Historical Outline

1. Peter's readers must live with a sense of responsibility and mission to community and authority (2:11-17).
2. Peter's readers must do this even where they may suffer unjustly (2:18-20).
3. The reasons they should do this are because they are called to do it and Christ has modeled it (2: 21-24).
4. The result of doing it is that they would glorify God and win others (vs. 25; 3:1-7).

PASSAGE FIVE I Peter 3:8-18

The Study

1. **vs. 8** Peter encourages community building: living in harmony with one another, sharing sympathetic feelings and concerns, loving one another as brothers, being compassionate and humble. These do not only create an atmosphere of peace and blessing, but they also build community. This community brings a sense of belonging and hospitality (which he mentions in 4:9). Especially since (in vs. 9) they face evil treatment from others, they should insulate themselves with a community of peace and hope and love.
2. **vs. 9** Is this meant for relationships between themselves, or between them and the people who make them suffer? It is more likely the latter. At any rate, their

behavior is not to be characterized by the old life, but the new values associated with their calling. Mission is evident once more! They are to be a blessing to their communities.

3. **vs. 10-14** Peter, as usual, gives the scriptural backing, basis and foundation for what he has just enjoined. He quotes Psalm 34:12-16a, the essence of which is that the way to long life and blessing is to refrain from evil speech and doing evil, since God is watching carefully. This bolsters the idea of mission: do right, because he who sent you to do what you are to do is watching. The rhetorical question at vs. 13 is in reference to the clear suggestion that while doing evil brings harm from God, doing good does not! So if God does not harm us for doing good, does it matter *ultimately* if anybody else tries to? In other words, if God does not (terminally) fault us for doing good (but can if we did evil), why should we hesitate to do good, regardless of who may want to hurt us for doing it? He completes the thought explicitly in vs. 14: that even if someone vilified them for doing good, they are still blessed, because God does not fault/harm them! They are in a good position!

4. **vs. 15-17** This doing good despite being treated with evil actually appears, in Peter's thinking, to open opportunities for witness: the aliens will have opportunities to say why they have this hope. It is possible to boast of self, more than Christ. Therefore, the attitude and tone with which they share this must be kept in check; they should do it with gentleness and respect, and "in conscience" (the same word/concept he uses in 2:19). This must be about God, not them! All

of this is so that they may silence their unfair critics with their good behavior in Christ. This accomplishment supports the goal of the mission of uplifting the name of Christ and the standard of the church and Christians in hostile territory.

5. **vs. 17-18** In returning to the overarching matter (that it is better to suffer for doing good than for doing evil), he turns to the reason for doing it. He shows his readers how Jesus, who suffered for doing good, not evil, had as his result, *their* being brought to God. Further, despite his having suffered and died, that was not the end: he was made alive again! He suffered, but he was not the loser!

En route to a Sermon: The Historical Outline

1. The Christians in Asia-Minor should cultivate a caring community (vs. 8; refer to 4:8-11 *and* 2:9, both of which address community also).
2. They should extend this care beyond their community by not returning evil for evil (vs. 9; refer to 4:3-4).
3. They are called to do this as a means of witness/mission (vs. 9b-18). (*This may actually enlarge the community, according to vs. 18a!*)

PASSAGE SIX I Peter 4:1-11

The Study/Exegesis

1. **vs. 1-2** This “Therefore” takes the reader back to 3:18. The “arming of oneself with the same attitude” would most likely refer to (a) the believer’s

attitude of willingness to suffer; (b) the believer's attitude of willingness to suffer *for good*, rather than for evil; (c) the believer's attitude of willingness to suffer sacrificially, and (d) the believer's attitude of willingness to suffer for those with whom they share, or even *expect* to share, **community**. But it evidently refers to more than that, as suggested by the second part of the verse, followed by "because." Peter means that Christ, though he were not a sinner, having taken the sins of the world upon himself, and having borne the penalty for those sins, he is, by his death and resurrection, "done with sin." Similarly, then, the believer, having *been* a sinner, now having been "brought to God (3:18), is now to be "done with sin" since Christ has made that possible. Verse two simply states that fact and that truth, clarifying that being "done" with sin ("human desires") means having "started" with "the will of God"!

2. **vs. 3-4** Peter continues his reasoning, reflecting on the timeliness of this change to living according to God's will. He argues that enough time has been wasted on the sinful life – a laundry list of ugly and impure items: debauchery, lust, drunkenness, orgies, carousing, and detestable idolatry. The sooner unbelievers are able to view their sinful life as a waste of time, the better! The sooner believers understood their past sinful lives as a grand waste of time, the better! Not everyone sees it that way, however! Peter understands the blindness of those still locked into the wasteful sinful life. In fact, they are aghast and amazed that the new believers are loath to join in with them in their "flood of

dissipation” as Peter calls them! The result of the believers’ polite declination is a heap of abuse!

3. **vs. 5-6** One of the reasons believers should not “repay evil for evil or insult with insult” (3:9) is that the perpetrators of the evil and insults will have to give an account of their conduct to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead – evidently God himself! Peter’s use of the word “ready” concurs with his declaration at the beginning of verse 7: “the end of all things is near.” What at first appears to be a difficult or even insurmountable affirmation in verse 6 is really quite manageable. First, by process of elimination, Peter could not be saying that the gospel was preached to those who are dead *when* they were already dead! There is nothing in the immediate context or in the entire letter of Peter to suggest the viability of this position. Additionally, there is nothing in all of Scripture to suggest or support this. Even if one were to assert that the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31) comes close, Abraham in fact told the rich man that there is no evangelistic preaching to those who are in Hades! So this position must be rejected out of hand. Second, also by process of elimination, Peter could not be saying that the gospel is preached to those who are spiritually dead (but alive physically). The logic and grammar of the sentence disallows that, as well as the context, in which Peter is clearly referring to the *physically* dead (vs.5). So what then is it? The only option left (not only by process of elimination, but also by clear logic) is that the gospel was preached to people at the time they were alive, but who are now dead. The verb Peter uses

here (euangelizthai) is not the same he used in 3:19 (kerusso). In the latter, he simply proclaimed – heralded, announced or declared – to the spirit-world of disobedience (Colossians 2:14-15; Ephesians 6:12; II Peter 4:5; Jude 6) that he was (still, again) the living, victorious Lord even though it was the spirit of humankind’s disobedience that secured his death. In the former, he preaches good news, which those who heard believed and though now dead, are alive in the spirit.

4. **vs. 7** Because the end-time is near, the believers need to be self-controlled and sober-minded so that they can pray. Peter may well mean this literally, given the readership he was targeting; but this also suggests that effective prayer is thoughtful and must emanate from a pure heart. It also suggests that the end-time is a serious time where things become immutable and final. Prayer towards this is therefore necessary.

5. **vs. 8** This is no place or time for superficial or insincere love – it is place and time for the “real mckoy”: deep love, the kind that overlooks faults and which covers over many sins. It couldn’t be that Peter is talking about mere sentiment or emotion; it is more likely that he was referring to a love that was “stretched” greatly to self-giving and *for*-giving!

6. **vs. 9** True self-giving love provides kindness to **strangers**, hence, *philoxenoi*, a cognate of *philos* and *xenoi*, the love of strangers. Hospitality does kindness on the basis of need, not knowledge, and for nothing in return (rather

than some known benefit which information might be accessible from someone who isn't a stranger).

7. **vs. 10** The **love** and the **community** which Peter has been addressing, both come into sharp focus in this single verse. Each person has received a spiritual gift/ability but it is for the **service** of the whole and wider church. These gifts/abilities are not the possession of those who exercise them; rather those who exercise them are "stewards." These gifts are the "many forms" of God's grace, given to every believer in the church-community.

8. **vs. 11** The two chief categories of ministry are identified: *speaking* and *serving*. Both represent God. "That in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ" clarifies that the believers are not to become the focus of attention or praise because of the gifts (just in case the reader missed it in the previous verse). The glory is God's.

En route to a Sermon: The Historical Outline

1. Peter's readers are to engage the same attitude of Christ and be finished with sin (vs. 1-3).
2. They should bear in mind the cost of doing this as well as the cost of not doing it (vs. 4-6).
3. They need to distance themselves from sin so that they can be sober-minded enough to truly do Christian service (vs. 7-11).

PASSAGE SEVEN I Peter 4:12-19

The Study/Exegesis

1. **vs. 12** Peter's readers should not be caught off-guard in suffering. Neither should the nature nor timing of the suffering strike them as strange. The very fact that it could happen should not take them by surprise!

2. **vs. 13** Instead of recoiling in surprise, they should rejoice in suffering, because they have the rare opportunity to participate in Christ's sufferings. (They can do this because they also participate in his alien status.) This gives them eligibility to see his glory. If they rejoice at sufferings, then they would be *overjoyed* at his glory! Here, as everywhere else in Scriptures, glory is preceded by suffering endured.

3. **vs. 14-16** If they are insulted and ill treated because of their allegiance to Christ or association with him or identification ("name") with him, they are blessed because the Spirit of glory and the Spirit of God rests on them. The idea is that glory is guaranteed not because of them, but because of God; glory is guaranteed not from *any* suffering, but from suffering *because of* faith in Christ – being a Christian (vs. 16). Therefore they should avoid suffering for sin or crimes (vs. 15). Suffering for being a Christian should bring praise; suffering for sin or crimes should bring shame.

4. **vs. 17-18** It is not charity alone that begins at home – it is judgment too! Peter's readers should judge themselves – it is time that this is done, he says. And what is this judgment? It is believers considering their ways and ensuring

that they are not committing themselves to suffering for sins and crimes. Everyone will face judgment, beginning with the household of faith. Those outside the family of God will face a tough judgment. Therefore, those who suffer for doing good should never change this – they should continue to do good, committing themselves to God, lest they find themselves among those whose judgment will be tragic.

5. vs.19 Those who suffer in the way Peter recommends must commit themselves to the Creator God (suggesting dependence more than relationship) and continue to do good.

En route to a Sermon: The Historical Outline

1. Peter's readers should expect suffering (for doing good) as a matter of course (vs. 12).
2. They should rejoice at their sufferings because it signifies great favor and benefit (vs. 13-14).
3. They should ensure that they always suffer for doing good rather than for doing wrong (vs. 15-19).
4. The reason for this is that God judges wrongdoers and blesses good-doers (vs. 14-19).

PASSAGE EIGHT I Peter 5:1-5

The Study/Exegesis

1. **vs. 1** Peter addresses the church leaders, challenging them on the basis of his partnership (“fellow elder”) and sufferings (bearing witness to) in Christ and his hope/confidence that he will share Christ’s glory. Peter practices what he preaches! He just challenged the believers to suffer with this same hope of sharing Christ’s glory (4:14). Now he espouses the same hope, as should be expected.
2. **vs. 2-3** He challenges them, as fellow elders and shepherds of the flock (which they already are) to be mindful of the *motives* for doing this ministry. Consequently, he challenges them (a) to willing service rather than compelled duty (which is God’s preference and will); (b) to eagerness of service rather than eagerness for money and; (c) to be examples (implication of parity or partnership) rather than bosses (implication of superiority). It might be that the warning is meant to counter the kind of motives that the “pagans” apply to their leadership relationships.
3. **vs. 4** The mention of a reward – an imperishable crown of glory, to be given by the “Chief Shepherd” – serves as an incentive to service that is willing rather than compelled. It encourages concern for people and discourages undue concern for money; it speaks from humble encouragement rather than for bossy superiority or for personal “kingdom” building. It challenges those outside of

the ministry who think there is no worth in being shepherds and it also challenges those who are doing ministry for the wrong reasons.

4. **vs. 5** “Young men”, as many commentaries suggest, may not be chronologically young men in general; nor might it be a class of leaders called young men. Many think it is younger elders – maybe trainees, maybe apprentice elders. Whatever it is, it would be clearly out of place or at least awkward for Peter to switch here to address all young men. Therefore it is probable that it is some class of leaders he is here addressing, and it is not critical to determine which exactly those might be. It is enough to make the point that if the “elder elders” (of vs. 1) could be discouraged against “lording it over” the flock, then the younger elders could also be discouraged against it “in the same way.” If the “elder elders” should submit to forging partnership and parity with the flock, then the younger elders should, “in the same way”, submit to those who are older. It is the same mutual submission that Paul demands in Ephesians 5:21. Peter spells this out in the latter part of the verse. (“In the same way” doesn’t suggest that the elders of vs. 1 were submitting to other older people; it simply refers to the act of submission.) The encouragement for all of this is that God disgraces the proud, but embraces and “engraces” the humble.

En route to a Sermon: The Historical Outline

1. Church leaders must care for the church with pure and proper motives (vs. 1-3).

2. Christ will reward them for this (vs. 4).
3. This should engender/spark a culture of humility (and submission) in the church (vs. 5).
4. God blesses those who display this humility (vs. 5).

PASSAGE NINE I Peter 5:6-11

The Study/Exegesis

1. **vs. 6** This thought actually carries over from the previous section, but it seems to lead to a new thought, deserving separate treatment. The “therefore”, of course, relates to the reason for humility – that God graces the humble but disgraces the proud. The idea of God lifting up those who humble themselves is already clear in Peter’s letter: it has been done for Jesus (3:18) and will be for the elders (5:4). So Peter only takes the thought to conclusion: that there is no loss in humbling self under God. God will, in perfect time, redress, lift up, deliver, and reward. This means that suffering for doing good, while seeking no redress or retaliation may be difficult, but not loss. This has implications for non-violent civil disobedience, even while raising questions about the disobedience.

2. **vs. 7** Therefore, there is no need to worry while suffering for doing good. There is no reason to be anxious as the time drags on; even if there were, Peter recommends casting the anxieties on God, with the simple – yet powerful – assertion that God cares for us!

3. **vs. 8** Self-control has already been enjoined: 1:13; 2:1 (implied); 2:11 (implied). But here Peter gives a specific reason, never before mentioned in his letter: the devil. This should not be taken as an isolated reference in a vacuum; what Peter appears to be doing as he comes to close his letter, is to personalize the sufferings and the trials that the readers suffer, and locate it in the work of the devil. Either that, or he certainly links the potency of these trials and sufferings with the devil: either the devil causes them or uses them! And for this they need to be very watchful (“alert”)! The devil is on the offensive: he is (a) the enemy; (b) prowling around, a predator-lion roaring because he considers himself in dominance – “king” of the jungle – over all of his prey. Dominance? When Christ is Lord? And when God lifts up the humble? Dominance? When in his proud roar he seals his doom of God’s opposition? This irony is hard to miss. What is also hard to miss is Peter’s warning that the devil’s clear intent is utter, complete, destruction.

4. **vs. 9** The devil is to be resisted by standing firm in the faith. This suggests that the devil’s power is more in our thinking, in our decision-making and in our beliefs, than in our deeds. Possibly the second part of this verse has to do with the devil’s having power over us because of our thinking that we are all alone. The brave Elijah fell for the same trap (I Kings 19:10, 14, 18)! No! They are not alone! The community to which they belong extends beyond Asia-Minor to the world! And there *is* power in the family of God, if not in numbers! We go forth

more confidently in suffering when we know we are not alone – and they should not forget that foremost among those who join us in suffering is Jesus!

5. **vs. 10** Peter ends with a promise: after his readers suffer a “little while”, God would restore them, making them strong, firm and steadfast. The absence of “if” clarifies that it is not a conditional promise *per se*. This has to be the picture of glory, glory as of a return from exile. A doxology (without the *doxa!*) follows.

En route to a Sermon: The Historical Outline

1. The readers are to trust God, humbling themselves and trusting his timing and grace (vs. 6-7).
2. They are to understand that there is a diabolic component to their situation of suffering (vs. 8-9).
3. God will eventually restore and strengthen them after they have suffered (vs. 10-11).

Chapter Three

Preaching To Diasporic Caribbean Christians: *What May Be Discovered About It?*

There is nothing written about preaching to Diasporic Caribbean Christians (DCC) *per se*. In order to arrive at an understanding of the topic on the basis of material that is already written, one shall have to construct a composite picture of several components. Material is available pertaining to the following main themes, which support the idea of preaching to DCC:

- (1) The Caribbean Identity;
- (2) The Caribbean Christian Identity;
 - (a) Theological Issues
 - (b) Missiological Issues
- (3) Christian Community in Diaspora – Integration and Assimilation;
- (4) Immigration Issues and Problems.

Material is also available related to the following sub themes, which also support the idea of preaching to DCC:

- (1) A theology of diaspora;
- (2) Christians in diasporic conditions;
- (3) Preaching in diasporic conditions;
- (4) Issues on Preacher Consciousness.

The review of the literature will follow the themes and sub themes in that order.

1. The Caribbean Identity

Victor Price (*Self-Determination: Ministering to West Indians in a Land of Social Change and Cross Cultural Conflict*) offers some perspective on Caribbean identity. He addresses the issue of the identity of West Indians (as he prefers to call Caribbean people) who live in the United States (US), exploring the American challenges to their strong Caribbean identity. His thesis explores the strong identity that West Indians bring with them to the US. He notes differences between African-Americans and West Indians. He suggests that among the chief reasons for these differences are the following: the number of years of emancipation the West Indies enjoyed ahead of the US, the fact that the West Indian came from a society that celebrated his blackness, and the fact that many of them owned land, had political, ethnic and other freedoms.

According to Price, West Indians are able to easily entrench themselves educationally and professionally in the US. This is because they have a strong sense of identity and confidence that is fostered in the West Indies before they come to the USA. "It has been estimated that up to one third of the Black professionals in New York in the first part of the 20th Century were West Indians" (59). "Economics and education have played major roles in the West Indian's quest for success" (60). Upon arriving in the US, West Indians have a cultural challenge given their strongly forged Caribbean identity. That challenge

is racism, misidentification, misunderstanding and mistrust. According to him, “West Indian people are culturally distinct and possess a mindset significantly different to that of the African American” (2). So in America, Price does not consider himself “Black”, and certainly not African-American. He is a West Indian (ii). He believes that the American church must seek to understand West Indian people’s cultural origins so as to accelerate their adaptation to the cultural context within which they now seek self-actualization after migration (2).

Caribbean immigrants

are placed in double jeopardy as “double outsiders” ...most Whites reject the West Indian as another Black while African Americans may reject or look down on the West Indian because of his or her refusal to identify with them in their struggle for race relations (38).

2. The Caribbean Christian Identity – (a) Theological Issues

An exploration of Caribbean Christian identity may yield more information about Caribbean identity in general. *With Eyes Wide Open* edited by David I. Mitchell, is a collection of papers presented to the inaugural assembly of the Caribbean Conference of Churches in 1973. That was a watershed event. The book has as its cornerstone, development issues. It addresses the development of the Caribbean through Christian witness (23-54), the challenges of development in the Caribbean in general and in certain individual territories (55-99). One paper (120-133) deals also with the issue of Caribbean Theology, at a time when it (Caribbean Theology) was still fomenting. Even then it is clear that Caribbean

people saw the need to view and reinterpret their own culture and history through theological eyes, and to reinterpret certain biblical givens (like the Exodus) through the eyes of their experience (125f). This represents the beginning and development of a strong sense and understanding of one's "Caribbeanness" and Christian Caribbeanness at that, which carries over to Diasporic Caribbean Christians in the US. All of the papers address the role that the Caribbean church had to play in the development of the Caribbean (in the last quarter of the last century). These are issues touching on self-determination. Persons leaving the Caribbean at that time to become part of the diaspora in the US would probably have left with these issues fresh on their minds and with a strong sense of uniqueness and pride as a Caribbean person. Those immigrants would not have considered themselves losers. While they might have considered themselves in need of financial improvement and educational furtherance, they would by no means have considered themselves beggars or the dregs of society. Those leaving subsequently would probably have left with a greater sense of self-determination entrenched in themselves.

Noel Erskine (*Decolonizing Theology*) traces the development of the religion of the Caribbean, the impact of Black theology (of James Cone, et al.) on the Caribbean, alongside the development of Liberation theology. Erskine takes a historical journey through the time of slavery, through to the arrival of the first "African American" preacher in Jamaica (George Liele, 1783), and looks at the

dynamics of religion among slaves vis-à-vis whites during those years. He looks at the “response” (as he calls it) of the white church in America to these issues – the white church, which he says failed to see the radical implications of the gospel (61). Erskine also traces the development of some of the folk religions – African retentions – in the Caribbean. He observes that this has implications for Caribbean people, especially those whose family traditions still have recognizable retentions of African traditions even after they migrate to the US. He suggests that,

another way of looking at the world from which black people came is to compare it with the Old Testament world. There are significant similarities between black people’s world, as it is reflected in African traditional religion, and the Old Testament world (37).

William Watty (*From Shore to Shore, Soundings In Caribbean Theology*) discusses what Caribbean theology is. He suggests from the outset that it is not that which enters books (by which time the theology is already done) or that which can be delineated in “abstract propositions.” It is instead, the assimilation of all the experiences of God that can be garnered from testimonies, autobiographies and real life situations experienced in the Caribbean by those who encounter God. Caribbean theology is an indigenous analysis and interpretation of the Caribbean person’s experience of God, without the insinuation of external or extraneous sources. Watty identifies those extraneous sources as the colonial powers which created the Caribbean and for whose

expansion the Caribbean was created (16). To arrive at a credible and accurate Caribbean theology, one had to accept (so it was in 1979) that the era of colonialism was not over. One had to accept that colonialism continued to live through the “entrenched and internalized” systems that remained despite “the transfer of power” to Caribbean people (16). Watty suggests that the Caribbean is more European than Europe in its mimicked theology (19) – that God, to the Caribbean person, is a European God! He expresses fascination – “but no surprise” – at what he calls a contemporary phenomenon: the ease with which some Caribbean pastors and priests, born and bred in the Caribbean, settle in the Churches of North America, being disenchanted with the “New Caribbean.” Watty claims that they do so happily; however, conversations with Diasporic Caribbean clergy reveal that this is only half the truth.⁶ He shows the dissimilarities between Black (American) theology (a-la James Cone, et al.), Liberation theology (of South America) and Caribbean theology. He observes the differing needs and stimuli in those lands that created the different theologies. He asserts that it is not only inappropriate to import the other theologies to the Caribbean, but fruitless, since the Caribbean has its own set of stimuli and needs, which are sufficiently valid to warrant a Caribbean Theology. The premise of this theology is the uniqueness of the Caribbean experience. Watty insists that the Caribbean experience has as its historical components,

⁶ Caribbean immigrants to America, as this study bears out, have varied experiences, many negative and challenging. Pastors, no doubt, as observed by this author, and as is his own experience, also participate in these experiences.

dynamics arising from slavery and imperial and colonial domination. Both components facilitate the effacing and removal of identity, replacing it with something foreign. Yet, the Caribbean person is remarkably strong, hospitable, tolerant, affirmed, integrates well and is unspoiled. Watty declares, that he is surprised that “there are not more chips on our shoulders” (28). He briefly mentions Marcus Garvey (himself a Caribbean person in diaspora in America early in the last century), as a person who stimulated – even opened – discussion on issues pertaining to the religion, theology and lifestyles of Black people especially in the New World. The origins of the civil rights quest launched by African Americans in the middle of the last century may be easily traced back and linked to Garvey’s work and his Universal Negro Improvement Association (69).

Watty co-edits a book with Clement Gayle (*The Caribbean Pulpit – An Anthology*). The first sermon (by Sergio Arce-Martinez, a Cuban: “What Is Man?” – Psalm 8:4) decidedly focuses on the Caribbean identity and theology of selfhood. The second sermon (by Hyacinth Boothe, a Jamaican) affirms a role of equality of woman with man in the church. It adopts a high view of woman as strong. This is a view reflective of the average Caribbean woman, especially a churchwoman. This has been buttressed by strong Caribbean churchwomen’s organizations, and the fact that many Caribbean churches have welcomed women to the ordained ministry for the past thirty years. When women from

these situations migrate to America, they carry this same strength. In the same book (49-53) Errol Miller, a Baptist lay person – no student or graduate of Theology – preaches a sermon that demonstrates the high level of theological reflection of which many Caribbean non-ordained church persons are capable. Richmond Nelson's sermon (54-56) calls its hearers back to a strong patriotism that celebrates their land, their heritage and themselves. Charles Smith (57-62) calls for steadiness of Christian moral values in an affluent society. This is the kind of call to which Caribbean immigrants to the US need to be continually exposed.

Even in print, Burchell Taylor's erudition, superior exegetical skills and insightfulness, known to Caribbean congregations, stand out. This sermon (63-69) calls its Caribbean listeners to being true to who they are and who they are called to be. It is a sermon on identity. Taylor's thrust is demonstrative of the chief and all-encompassing issue that dogs the path of Caribbean immigrants: identity, culminating in integrity – Taylor's last watchword. Taylor's scholarship is demonstrative of the level of thinking to which Caribbean congregants are commonly exposed. This offers those in America who preach to Caribbean immigrants some ideas for their ministry. William Watty's erudition is also evident, as is the thrust of his sermon, this time to graduates of the University of the West Indies (who commonly scatter all over the Caribbean and several

metropolitan areas in the USA).⁷ Watty's sermon (75-80) also has to do with identity – an identity that develops as one wrestles with the things revealed and the things secret. Caribbean immigrants in diaspora have many questions and have many revelations to face – revelations about themselves and their environment. This should strengthen, rather than weaken, their faith, since they already have enough (revealed to them) to go on.

Miguel A. de la Torre (chapter 4, in *Religion, Culture and Tradition in the Caribbean*, Hemchand Gossai and Nathaniel Samuel Murrell, eds.) finds striking similarities between Cuban exiles in America (Miami in particular) and the Judean exiles in Babylon in the 6th century BCE. He warns that the Caribbean exiles in America should never lose sight of their responsibility to those who have remained “in Judah”, or in any way contribute to the domination (“hegemony”) of their homeland by the land they now call home (84-88).

For Horace Russell (chapter 5, in Gossai and Murrell) the Caribbean theology that has developed in the past 30-35 years is traceable to the abstract and practical theologies of early Caribbean “theologians” such as George Liele,⁸ Moses Baker, Sam Sharpe, George William Gordon, Paul Bogle (95-113), some of whom rose to prominence in the late 19th century. All of these persons were

⁷ Eighty-five percent of this university's graduates emigrate (The Hartford Courant, March 31, 2006, p.A3).

⁸ Liele was born a slave in the USA, but removed to Jamaica in 1783, to begin Baptist witness there.

Baptists in Jamaica. To be sure, each Caribbean territory or Christian denomination can boast of its own heroes, whose theologies intersected providentially with slavery and abolition, or post-slavery issues.

Leslie James (chapter 7, in Gossai and Murrell), while drawing reference to several Caribbean heads of government,⁹ traces a central theme (143-163) in which he asserts that,

Caribbean politicians, through their use of the biblical text in their rhetoric of change in the post-World War II decolonization era, developed, in varying degrees, a unified view of history in which the sacred and the secular realms of human existence were integrated (144).

This means that by the time Caribbean people – even if not decidedly Christian but especially if they were – emigrated to the USA, their political world-view and theology would have already enmeshed and colluded with some *other* biblically aware ‘authority’. This is what the Caribbean immigrant in the pew brings to the table.

Michael Pocock and Joseph Henriques have co-authored *Cultural Change & Your Church, Helping Your Church Thrive in a Diverse Society*. Pocock asserts that there are “wonderful examples” in existence of churches in America that

⁹ Michael Manley (Jamaica), Eric Williams (Trinidad and Tobago), Maurice Bishop (Grenada) and Jean-Bertrand Aristide (Haiti) – he later mentions, from among the following, some others like Marryshow (Grenada), Grantley and Tom Adams and Errol Barrow (Barbados), PJ Patterson (Jamaica) and even Forbes Burnham (Guyana).

“intentionally orient their people to the changes (growing ethnic diversity) going on in their community” (16). He also reports that “many Christian and local churches have failed to ‘do the right thing’ in response to ethnic change” (17). Pocock considers the industriousness of immigrant peoples in general. Referring specifically to Hispanics, he claims to observe that soon after arriving in the US they quickly rise to middle-class status.¹⁰ He notes the increasing fears about culture and economics that others have in response to this development (17-18). Pocock takes his readers on a “visit” to 5 churches, which he says “saw the changes as challenges and the obstacles as opportunities” (19). Interestingly Pocock’s sample observes immigrants who are Hispanics, Japanese, Koreans, British, Scottish, German, Scandinavian, Asians (Vietnamese, Cambodians, Laotian, Chinese), Filipino and Russian (20-31). No Caribbean immigrants are mentioned. Perhaps this is so because the Caribbean immigrant is considered African-American. Perhaps this is so because the Caribbean person is not as different, culturally, from Americans, compared to other immigrants (some of whom Henriques outlines on pages 39-40).

Henriques, identifies what he calls “clouds” in the American communities. These clouds are challenges to American churches arising from cultural issues. As he examines these clouds, he deals with some of the problems

¹⁰ This observation would appear curious to many other observers across America, including this author’s observation of the sizeable Hispanic population of Hartford, Connecticut, the majority of whom are by no means middle-class.

arising from identity issues such as ethnocentricity, nationalism and traditionalism (33-57). Henriques ends this examination with a useful contribution to the matter of churches' response to cultural change: that churches

and church leaders of today have a threefold role in multicultural ministry. They are to be *sustainers* of their cultural traditions that promote and help God's work, *breakers* of those traditions that hinder, and *blenders* of the traditions of the cultures represented in their church (53).

In a chapter entitled "The Compass for the Journey" (as well as in Henriques' chapters "Conversing about Christ" and "Using Dialogue to Win People to Christ", 145-178), both authors identify Scripture as the compass for multicultural ministry (79-97). Since this is so, it becomes abundantly clear that preaching is to be considered a cornerstone issue in ministry to Diasporic Caribbean Christians, and others, in any diaspora.

Larry Witham's work (*Who Shall Lead Them? The Future of Ministry in America*) helps in pointing out the stark differences between the African-American and the Caribbean immigrant. The book examines the dynamics that contribute to current trends in ministry, the future of ministry, and the role of some major denominations and groupings in ministry (such as, *inter alia*, the Southern Baptists, the Catholic Priesthood and Minority Clergy). In "The Minority Challenge" (chapter 5) he quotes Dorothea Belt Stroman, a black minister with the United Methodist Church, who claims that a theme of oppression – minorities feeling less empowered – will always be a part of African

American preaching. "We can't act like it never happened" (102). He refers to Gardener Taylor, who he says, claims that

the African (American) church began as a protest to slavery but now is a place where black folks draw identity in an alien society. 'The church began in oppression...When we get too far away from that we lose perspective (104).

Using the exegesis of First Peter as the basis, one is doubtful that Peter might agree with the establishment of an exclusive church as the answer to oppression. Ernest Best would certainly concur. He says of I Peter 2:12, that "...slandered or persecuted Christians are not to withdraw into a ghetto..." (Best 111). This is not to ignore any special circumstances that attended the oppressive scenario to which Taylor refers. Neither is it to be unaware of the Caribbean Christian, whose heritage reveals a different kind of oppression – a history of slavery (as for the African-American), followed by a lengthy period of colonialist rule (compared to a much briefer period in America). There are many Caribbean Christians who have established churches that consist exclusively or almost exclusively, of Caribbean immigrant membership. On the other hand, there are many Diasporic Caribbean Christians who readily join with already established white or black American churches. Indeed Witham refers to Marvin Winans who dissents from Stroman and Taylor. Winans affirms that, "to think that the black church is simply something born out of slavery is incorrect...the church was born out of God...too much emphasis on politics and race undermines the church's universal role" (104). This is probably the way most Caribbean

immigrants in American churches would think. This matter does not only address the DCC identity; it addresses the DCC community as well.

In *Leading Captivity Captive: 'The Exile' as History and Ideology*, Lester L. Grabbe (ed.) sees a “different nuance” between exile and diaspora (151-152). This is the position taken in this entire study. This too is the reason First Peter, instead of Old Testament exilic literature, was used in the previous chapter for its biblical-theological basis, and also the reason Caribbean immigrants are viewed herein as diasporic rather than exilic.

Rodney Clapp claims in *The Church As Counterculture* (Budde and Brimlow, eds.), that in Peter’s time the Church was seen by itself and others, as a “third race,” neither Jew nor Gentile but a new and holy nation or people – *hagios ethnoi* – I Pt 2:9 (28). In the same volume Brueggemann describes Israel, “Always in the Shadow of the Empire” (and in the chapter so named), as an intentional, distinctive community in the world, dominated first by Egypt, next by Assyria, then by Babylon and finally by Persia (39-58). Had Brueggemann been focusing beyond the Old Testament, he probably would have included Rome as the next dominator, which Peter and the Asia-Minor Christians knew well. Caribbean immigrants today have that kind of history: some island territories-nations have had Dutch, then Spanish, then French, then British rule (or some inversion of the

same variables) – and all in a fraction of the time Israel went through her foreign domination!

2. The Caribbean Christian Identity – (b) Missiological Issues

The average Caribbean Christian who comes to live in the USA does not *want* to become American (even if American citizenship is sought), and they who occupy the American pulpit should know that fact from the beginning. There is a reason for this. The spiritual, religious and ecclesiastical journey through which the Caribbean Church has gone, has in the opinion of this thesis, equipped Diasporic Caribbean Christians in America with the foundational fundamentals to be missiological in their Christian living abroad. The Caribbean Church – and Caribbean theologians too – has assessed the dynamics and impact of mission that was practiced upon them as it were, by representatives of the missionary movement of the 19th and 20th centuries. That comprehensive assessment has afforded the Caribbean Christian a broad and critical perspective about mission. That assessment, this thesis will argue, enables the Diasporic Caribbean Christian (DCC) to engage meaningfully in missiological witness, such as Peter challenged the Christians of Asia-Minor to do. William Watty, a Caribbean theologian, and a former president of the United Theological College of the West Indies (UTCWI), warrants extensive attention. In *From Shore to Shore, Soundings In Caribbean Theology*, he declares the following:

Afro-Caribbean presents a different picture because when the slaves were denuded of their indigenous culture and religion, then Western Christianity – the very forces which cut them off from their African inheritance – came in through the back door to fill the vacuum. The history of colonialism in the Caribbean represents such an extreme case of manipulation and disorientation as to make it almost a freak-occurrence, unparalleled in history. It is a kind of cruel irony that Western culture and Western Christianity, which were part and parcel of the process of disorientation and dehumanization, became a substitute for the indigenous, which they conspired to destroy and then, at length, themselves became indigenous. This perhaps, more than anything else, accounts for the ambiguities of the Caribbean personality – at one and the same time brilliant and unstable, free and irresponsible, ostentatious and insecure, promising much and achieving little, shooting to the top like a meteor and then, in the next moment, plunging downwards into disgrace. He does not believe in himself nor does he believe in others like himself, because he knows that in their innermost beings neither he nor they are really themselves. No other race on the face of the earth, no other culture has ever had to come to terms with this particular predicament of a people who have had to fall back on and accept as their own, the very processes and forces which deprived them of their authentic selfhood in the first place – because there was nothing else to fall back on (5-6).

Watty further ups the ante when he declares,

though we shall never have the power to control or exploit other nations, though we shall never have the wealth to manipulate or even compete with other peoples, what we have aplenty are the ingredients for the creation of the kind of global community that the world is searching for and despairing of (28).

A DCC who has a keen understanding of and appreciation for his Caribbean Christian heritage, and who further, reads in First Peter a challenge to mission

when in diaspora, would be a prime candidate for Christian mission in America today!

Ashley Smith, who succeeded Watty at the helm of the UTCWI, has compiled a number of his academic papers in a publication called *Real Roots and Potted Plants, Reflections on the Caribbean Church*. The common thread through Smith's book is the strength of the theology, identity and ministry of the Caribbean Church. It asks: are the components of the Caribbean Church's identity merely a temporary (and weaker) potted plant or a stronger, permanent tree? Is the Caribbean Church a potted plant, brought in from missionary nurseries, that is yet to take root in Caribbean soil (44)? In identifying the Church's role in a situation of social change, Smith identifies the following as evidence of change: (1) shifts in people's awareness of reality, (2) new expectations, (3) demand for space (land, houses, equity, home), (4) dismantling and reordering of existing patterns of life, (5) secularization, (6) generational conflict, and (7) sex (gender) conflicts (27-29). The role of the church, he proposes, involves firstly acknowledging that in all ages the Church has been more likely to side with the established, the entrenched, the predictable, the tidy, and the stable, than with disorder, disruption and dislocation, all the early stages of change. While it smacks of what some dismiss as a social gospel, this is a fundamental perspective that is neither strange nor offensive to Caribbean Christians. Indeed, various segments of the Church in the Caribbean were

complicit with the slave trade and slavery, for example. As both Watty and Smith argue, the Europeanized Caribbean Church – that is the colonial Church, even the missionary Church – was also at several points more supportive of the establishment than of the disfranchised. Caribbean Christians from this crucible, finding themselves in diaspora where vestiges of the establishment overpowering the “alien” remain, may be ready to exercise a Christian witness that they understand as mission.

Lewin L. Williams, until his death at the time of this writing, was the president of the UTCWI. In his book, *Caribbean Theology*, he treats missionary theology as practiced in the Caribbean by European and North Americans, as “a theology of domination.” This is because that theology fosters a denial of self-actualization, one in which God is a foreign dictator, and where Christ is an inaccessible infiltrator. It brings a defective missionary praxis because its theology is defective (31-53). Diasporic Caribbean Christians understand the message of First Peter in which God is present with the suffering Christian aliens in Asia-Minor. They understand that Jesus Christ was no stranger suffering in the name of mission. Thus they are able to view themselves as candidates for a ministry of mission, since the seeds for this are sown in their identity as Christians.

3. Christian Community in Diaspora – Integration and Assimilation

L.G. Basch observes that Caribbean immigrants to the USA tend “to live in the same neighborhoods, shop in the same stores, work in the same offices, thereby sharing experiences that continue to create a sense of West Indianness” (qtd. in Price 39) when compared to other ethnic groups. Price notes that Caribbean families, especially those in diaspora in America, inculcate lessons surrounding “the value of the individual and the danger of individualism” (45). He continues, “the influence of the African village mentality brought a sense of community” (46).

Smith, speaking about the Caribbean Church, says,

The Church must always keep conceptually separate the word of God which it does not possess¹¹ and therefore can only serve and declare, and the edifices erected to God in the forms of architecture, liturgical models, creedal statement and administrative structures, which may serve either as vehicles of the word, or as barriers to its effective communication to the world for which it is intended (33).

He adds that the church “should endeavour to get people together from across social barriers so that they may have a chance to listen to each other...so that they may become fellow travelers towards their new homeland” (37). Even though Smith may not have been addressing, consciously, the issue of fellowship in the Church in diasporic situations, his observation is eminently applicable to

¹¹ Smith means that though the church possesses the word of God as in having it in their midst, they do not “possess” it in the sense of controlling it as they would, the buildings they “possess”.

the situation, having implications for a church which ministers to Caribbean immigrants! Remarkably, even though Smith was not addressing a situation of diaspora, he remarks that,

The Jew in the Roman colonies was a non-citizen and could only see the fulfillment of the promises of the gospel in another age; the slave and indentured labourer and subsequently the dispossessed and disinherited in the Caribbean region have seen personhood, freedom, and genuine fellowship (even with the bearers of the Good News) as that which could be possible only in an age to come, or perhaps in another country (11-12).

Therein Smith floats a fundamental reason for Caribbean immigration. While he was not advocating migration as a means to seek these promises (given the reality of migration as a means of seeking betterment), the church in America has a major role to play in facilitating this dream – this fulfillment of the gospel’s promises – at least in the way it promotes, forges, facilitates and fosters Christian community. A discerning preacher, in such a setting, has an important work to do.

Grabbe states that “the Assyrians tended to exile people as families and communities rather than just scattered individuals.¹² This could make it easier for people to retain their old identity” (81). Whatever the circumstances that led to the gathering of believers to whom Peter wrote in Asia-Minor, the fact remains that Peter wrote to them as one community – the Church – the crucible in which

¹² This, even though once in Assyria, many were subject to divide and rule tactics.

they could most easily retain their identity. Someone might argue that Diasporic Caribbean Christians should form their own ethnic churches in America. However, because all Americans are not the equivalent of the “pagans” among whom the Asia-Minor Christians lived, it is not necessary for DCC to establish exclusive churches so as to maintain an identity around a common faith and a common Lord. They will find many Americans and many other ethnic groupings, which also claim fellowship in that same faith and Lord.

In order to build community, sometimes – especially in diasporic conditions – a measure of integration and assimilation is unavoidable, desirable and even non-negotiable. Some American churches are aware of the work they have to do in order to foster this, with regard to diasporic Christians. Michael Pocock, in *Cultural Change & Your Church, Helping Your Church Thrive in a Diverse Society*, asserts that there are “wonderful examples” in existence of churches in America that “intentionally orient their people to the changes (growing ethnic diversity) going on in their community.” He also reports that “many Christian and local churches have failed to ‘do the right thing’ in response to ethnic change” (16). Pocock and co-author Henriques take their readers on a “visit” to 5 churches where, he says, they “saw the changes as challenges and the obstacles as opportunities” (19). This study has already taken note of Henriques’ observation (53) of the threefold role that churches and church have to play in multicultural ministry.

In *Migration and The Christian Faith*, Pieter de Jong suggests 4 steps towards coping in diaspora: (1) sense the omnipresence of God; (2) sing the Lord's song in a strange land; (3) sing the Lord's song in a new language and (4) join with believers from the new land in sharing witness to God (13-20). He says that because Christians do not live in enclaves or monasteries, because they are in the world (though not of it), it is necessary for immigrant Christians to integrate into their new communities. An overcoming of xenophobia on both sides of the fence – the immigrant's and the receiving community's – is indispensable to this integration (24). When this happens, the believer has assumed discipleship, as Paul (I Cor. 9:19-23) and Jesus (Phil. 2:5-8) did, and has contributed to building a new community (25-28). He suggests that would-be immigrants be prepared, chiefly by being conscientized to the cultures of other lands and peoples, especially the ones to whom they are going (29f). They should be made aware of their responsibility to those whom they have left behind (35f); and they should be aware that "he who moves away from his relatives still moves within the family or household of God" (36). Such is the reach and responsibility of Christian community. The receiving church, he advises, must view the immigrant as a stranger who belongs to the household of faith, and identify with them in the faith (39). Israel was asked to do the same for the other nations (Lev. 19:34; Deut 10:19). The receiving church must be careful

not to limit the help they offer to the spiritual and pastoral realm only, but to extend it to material and practical as well (42).

Gregg W. Detwiler, (*Nurturing Diaspora Ministry*) defines diaspora as “...any first-generation people who have left their original homeland either by force or choice” (4). His burden is to outline the “ecology” of diaspora (the relationship between diasporic people and their environments (5, 18), and the opportunity of the American church to reach them, the majority of whom, he contends, settle in urban America. While he notes the gradual assimilation of diasporic people into public life, business, labor, the economy and in religion (25-31) there are no compelling statistics to suggest that this is happening with any noticeable magnitude among the Caribbean diaspora except perhaps in metropolitan New York and Miami.¹³ He notes four congregational types that facilitate diasporic presence in the Christian church (and new culture): (1) the homogeneous ethnic congregations (those nearly totally, or totally comprised of members of the diaspora); (2) affinity-based congregations (groups that share a common language or culture); (3) multi-cultural and (4) receptor host-culture congregations – those churches already existing in the host culture that encourage and welcome diasporic people as members (32). Though not

¹³ Victor Price, referring to S. Patterson’s *A History of Dark Strangers* (1965), says, “two-thirds of American blacks of island descent were from the West Indies...they were among the most highly concentrated populations in the United States and made up 30% of New York’s black population, 17% of Florida, 7% of New England (pp.37-38). He adds, “West Indians began to migrate to the United States in the late nineteenth century and continue to migrate especially to the areas of New York City and Miami”(p.38).

concerned with preaching, Detwiler's thesis has a theological basis from which he declares that, "diaspora ministry, to be effective, must emerge from a solid biblical foundation" (48). This squarely justifies preaching as a significant pillar of ministry to diasporic people, without which such ministry would be more than incomplete. Detwiler offers 4 affirmations as catalysts towards a systemic theology of diaspora ministry (49-63). They all easily support the basis of a preaching ministry to diasporic people: (1) that God redeems people from all tribes, nations, and tongues (Gen 12:1-3; Matt 24:14; Acts 1:8; Rom 16:25-7; Rev. 5:9); (2) that God always has a plan to strategically use diasporic people (Gen 12:1-3; Esther; Acts 8:1-4; 11:19; 13:1ff; 17:26-27; I Peter 1:1; (3) that God always enjoins hospitality and care towards diaspora people from host nations (Ex. 23:9; Lev. 19:33-34; Deut. 10:17-9; 26:1-13; Matt. 25:31-46) and (4) that in the NT God uses the church as the instrument by which he makes ethnic, racial, and cultural unity out of diversity (Rom 10:12; Acts 2; Gal 3:28; Col 3:11). Interestingly, Detwiler makes the point that "all Euro-American Christians are diaspora people" (60) because all their ancestors were once first-generation immigrants and also because the Christian's home is not "below", but "above." He cites Jer. 29:4-7 as being a paradigm for wholistic mission and ministry. He cites Eldin Villafane's use of the text as a framework for his theology of urban ministry, suggesting that this is useful for a theology of diaspora ministry: presence, peace and prayer (63-66). Detwiler knows that, "not all diaspora Christians are interested in diaspora mission and ministry. Some, in fact, are resistant to being

identified by their ethnicity or national origin background" (107). This paper suggests that this observation should not be ignored; it is a warning that should lead to a constant awareness of the option of more integrated, "assimilated", multi-cultural churches (rather than homogeneous, ethnic or diasporic ones). In addition it prompts reflection on the theological, if not literal idea, that all Christians in America – first-generation immigrants or not – are in a kind of diaspora or a "Christian colony" in America as Hauerwas and Willimon call it. In Detwiler's project (103-127) there is a strong, overarching component of community.

This section on Community in Diaspora cannot be properly concluded without turning briefly to the Church's behavior in a diasporic community. *Living On The Borders: What the Church Can Learn from Ethnic Immigrant Cultures*, a book by Mark Griffin and Theron Walker, claims that the American church in a changing society has a lot to learn from ethnic immigrant cultures as it seeks to cope. The authors base the entire book on a number of assumptions, which they disclose up front. "Our first major assumption is that Christians now find themselves in the melting pot, as many an ethnic immigrant" (9). This makes the case that Christians, ethnically indigenous to the nation where they are found, are themselves aliens in a kind of diaspora, along with immigrants! The duo writes that, "the irony for Christians is that they ever consider a particular civilization their homeland" (20). This dovetails right into the theme of I Peter; in

fact, before long, the book cites I Peter 1 (22), and raises the matter of American Christians as aliens in America. The authors contend that it is a sense of liberalism that has yielded this situation in the melting pot that America has become (10-18). Griffin and Walker write on the basis of 4 more assumptions: (1) that the melting pot is not benign; (2) that the ghettoization of the world and (3) the absorption into it are twin perils facing the church and immigrants alike, and (4) that the church should seek to engage the world vigorously, instead of seeking hegemonic or official positions in it since its members' citizenship is in heaven (24). This author would suggest that this is squarely a Petrine position! Griffin and Walker bemoan the death of tradition, which they note is part of the life of the church (64f). This study has noted already, that one of the messages Peter communicates to the Asia-Minor Christians is a case for holding to the traditions of the faith and not return to their former ways (in the same way perhaps that DCC may be challenged to hold fast to wholesome Caribbean traditions). Griffin and Walker later espouse the value of church and traditional communities as communion, and the image of God as being in communion with Him (99-123). They conclude that chapter with the thought that in reality, communities may be abusive as well as life-giving (121) and that may in experience, include the church; however this is no reason to "forget that it is our nature (the church) to be communal" (123).

Once the matter of American Christians as aliens in America is raised, one might expect to hear something from Stanley Hauerwas. He weighs in with *After Christendom*. Explaining “Why Justice is a bad idea for Christians” (45-68) Hauerwas declares that, “as Christians we do not seek to be free but rather to be of use, for it is only by serving that we discover the freedom offered by God” (53-54). In fact, he insists that “the salvation promised in the good news is not a life free from suffering, free from servitude, but rather a life that freely suffers, that freely serves because such suffering and service is the hallmark of the Kingdom established by Jesus” (53). He warns the Church against the appealing nature of justice, claiming that, “there simply is no generally accepted Christian theory of justice” (56). Hauerwas ends this discourse by saying, “We forget that the first thing as Christians we have to hold before any society is not justice but God” (68). The implications of Hauerwas’ discourse for civil rights issues for example, are troubling. In fact, he ends his book with a letter from a student who takes issue with the lack of Christian corporate social responsibility that Hauerwas’ position seems to suggest. The matter is not an easy one at all, and questions remain. In another chapter (“How Marriage Is A Subversive Act”) he declares that, “we do not love because we are married, but because we are Christian” (127). Further (on the same page), “Christians do not believe marriage and the family exist for themselves, but rather serve the ends of the more determinative community called church.” This study has already observed opinions that Peter,

in addressing the slaves, wives and husbands (I Peter 2:18-3:7) is really addressing the entire community of believers.

4. Immigration Issues and Problems

Because many Caribbean immigrants are parents who have left the other parent behind with the children, problems arise. Price, a student of social work knows that. He states that Caribbean immigrants have special problems related to the social services, arising from problems that are created when parents and children are separated and then reunited, due to migration patterns (60f).

Henriques discloses that, "Many native-born Americans have low tolerance for immigrants whom they believe have come to America for what America has to offer, not because they love America or believe in the ideals of her founders" (45). The immediate, gut response of an immigrant might be, "So what?!" This paper takes notice of the fact that as far back as Israel's going down to Egypt, immigration has often been about what immigrants can get, not necessarily belief in the ideals of the new nation-home. Pocock in fact, also traces a brief overview of the migration of peoples going even earlier than Israel's journey to Egypt (59-62). He also raises some of the "push and pull" issues that led immigrants to be "pushed" from their lands and the "pull" of America, all of which has to do with freedom or prosperity or opportunities; none of which has to do with what the "founding fathers" of America thought, *per se* (66ff).

In *West Indian Societies*, David Lowenthal suggests that emigration will continue as long as economic prospects decline – and that in fact they are declining. “Many emigrants are less pulled toward ‘home’ than pushed out of the Caribbean by economic need” (213-214). Lowenthal (like Bryce-Laporte, below) raises the issues of personal victimization and prejudice endured by immigrants – especially the early ones – because of their blackness (223f).

In *Migrants and Refugees*, various authors address migration and refuge from international perspectives: African, Asian, and European. The collection of authors makes the case that there are several reasons for migration and many overlap. They draw attention to the horrors of migration and refuge (13-20), the history of migration and refuge (31-51), and the position that people do not flee voluntarily (71-72). They note that the “right of the alien runs through all the three great collections of law in the Old Testament”: the Book of the Covenant (Gen 22:20; 23:9), the Deuteronomic Law and in Priestly literature (Lev. 19:33f) (97-100). Frank Crusemann explores the difference between the Hebrew *gérím* – those strangers “who have neither family nor land where they are living, and who live as those seeking protection in a foreign country” (101) – and the *ben hanekar* – those “who are only traveling through like merchants...not in search of protection and a permanent stay” (102). “The demarcation line between types of people on the move like political refugees, ecological refugees, migrant workers

and asylum-seekers is blurring. More and more the reasons for emigrating are overlapping" (5).

Black Immigration and Ethnicity in the United States, An Annotated Bibliography offers sundry glimpses into this matter of immigration.

1. The Identity Problems associated with immigration:

(Black immigrants) suffer double invisibility on the national level – as Blacks and as Black foreigners. The Black immigrants are...pulled by the relatively open socio-economic opportunity structure of the US more than they are repelled by its rigid and institutionalized racial practices (81 - referring to an article by Roy Bryce-Laporte, "Black Immigrants", *Journal of Black Studies*, Vol.3, No.1 Sep 1972, pp. 29-56).

2. The transmission of immigrants' cultural values: The Caribbean woman in the USA is "a prime transmitter of viable cultural values" to her children and fellow immigrants (85 - referring to Lillian Anthony-Welsh, "A Comparative Analysis of the Black Woman As Transmitter of Black Values" Univ. of Mass., Ed.D. dissert. 1976).

3. Caribbean immigrants' ability to adapt readily:

Strategic flexibility is an important trait of the cultural and psychological make-up of Caribbean peoples. It is manifest in the ability to adjust rapidly to whatever comes along and the actual building of multiple options. It can thus be argued that Caribbean migrants may not see themselves as such. The Caribbean migrants, in crossing the boundaries of the nation state, are not acting out an aberration but are

doing something for which their culture has prepared them (86 – a summary of Charles Carnegie, “Strategic Flexibility in the West Indies”, *Caribbean Review*, Vol.11, No.1, 1982, pp 10-13, 54).

4. The difficult lifestyle of illegal immigrants: Caribbean immigrants, due to their illegal status, have to lie, dodge and deceive in order to survive and succeed (87 – referring to Orde Coombs, “Illegal Immigrants in New York” New York, Vol.9, No.11, pp.33-41).
5. The evolution of Caribbean immigrant identity: The fact that Caribbean immigrants have a strong sense of Caribbean identity (and maintain it when they arrive in the USA) has not always been that way. At least one study shows that earlier immigrants (1920-1940) adapted to and identified with America, while those after, maintained a Caribbean identification and orientation (89 – a reference to Monica Gordon, “Identification and Adaptation”, a Ph.D. dissertation, City University of NY, 1979).

Even though Pieter de Jong focuses on European migration, he raises some fundamentals that are properly applied to the migration of Caribbean people to the USA: the faith, witness, integration, preparation and reception of the migrant. Migration is a situation of crisis (5); it is a situation that offers a testing of one’s true morality and faith (7); the migrant’s experience should be a catalyst for developing his faith (12). In declaring that, “Any true believer is a

spiritual migrant" (12), de Jong supports the case that non-immigrant American Christians are themselves in a kind of alienated, if not diasporic, state.

In discussing the biblical origin of the idea of immigrants, Timothy K. T. Chan (*Preaching To First Generation Chinese Immigrants In New York City*) notes that, "God demonstrates His righteousness not merely to the elect, but also to other peoples" (18). This thesis notes how remarkable it is that by the time Peter writes, the "other people" have become the elect! Chan notes that in the OT, God is evidently concerned that immigrants be accorded recognition and humane treatment as part of his creation, regardless of their ethnicity or minority (17-25). It is essentially the same in the NT with the Holy Spirit working through love, to demonstrate God's clear inclusion of immigrants in his salvation history (26-38). Chan's perspective is mainly Chinese immigrants who receive the gospel, so his case is consequently slanted more on evangelical-outreach preaching (160-67) as opposed to preaching to people who were already in the faith prior to immigration.

Alfred Lam (*Preaching In Canadian English Speaking Chinese Congregations*) raises some observations about cultural clashes between American and Canadian-Born Chinese and Overseas-Born Chinese (76-78) which are similar to the kinds of clashes that Caribbean immigrants (especially the younger ones) are in the midst of, and over which the older ones chafe. (Two of the more prevalent

concerns are the young Caribbean [especially male] immigrants coming and emulating the idiosyncrasies of hip-hop, drug, dress and speech sub-cultures, and their swift move away from the respect for and deference to elders expected of youth back in the Caribbean.) Chan cites Samuel Ling (a Chinese writer) who raises doubt about whether this is purely a cultural phenomenon, or if the root of it was also a spiritual problem, or a problem of spiritual maturity (87).

For Jenna Weissman Joselit (*Immigration and American Religion*), “Immigration not only changed people’s lives, it also changed the meaning of religion” especially with the influx of Catholics, Jews, Muslims, Buddhists, Jains, Sikhs, Vodou, and others (12).

H. Richard Niebuhr (*Christ and Culture*) recognizes that there are basically two interpretations to the way Jesus engaged with his culture: that he was a Jew who remained this to his death, and that he “ignored everything concerned with material civilization” (3). After defining “culture” as always social, as human achievement, as that which is concerned with the “temporal and material realization of values” (32-36), and as that which is attended by pluralism (38), he launches into the thesis-antithesis-synthesis type argument that shows perspectives of Christ against culture, Christ of culture, Christ above culture, Christ and culture in paradox and Christ as the transformer of culture (45-229). Apart from the problems Niebuhr raises with each position, the question remains

(especially in the present time, more than 60 yrs after he first wrote): whose culture, and in which age? This only complicates an already complex matter!

Having examined the main themes which support the idea of preaching to DCC that this study has elicited so far, the focus now shifts to the sub-themes.

Sub-Theme 1: The Theology of Diaspora

In *A Biblical Theology of Exile*, Daniel L. Smith-Christopher begins by recollecting C.C. Torrey's amazing (and unpopular) opinion that the Old Testament exile was a relatively insignificant affair that has been made, through error and theoretical fancy, an issue that plays a major role in OT history (30)! As Smith-Christopher examines the problems attending this matter of an OT exile, he opines that, "Diasporic theology challenges the virtual capitulation to the normative status of nationalism as the only viable context for Christian theology and Christian social existence" (8). The situation Peter addressed proves this, as well as the conditions within which DCC must live in many instances in the USA. Smith-Christopher also warns that, "...a reading of biblical texts that presumes a crisis rather than a sanguine view of exile, reveals a much darker image of exilic circumstances than such assessments allow" (30). When this idea is juxtaposed with the circumstances of Peter's readers' diaspora, life in the diaspora might be viewed as actually worse than life in exile, or at least on the same "danger level." Smith-Christopher investigates the scholarly debates about

whether the exile was severe or not, and the circumstances that attended the exiles. He cites archaeological evidence that Jerusalem was in shambles and underwent considerable trauma in 586 BC (30-73). The issue is not whether the exile happened (as Robert P. Carroll, et al., explore in *Leading Captivity Captive: 'The Exile' as History and Ideology*) but the extent to which it did and the conditions encountered therein. He explores the idea of community – identifying and maintaining Israel's identity – as a component of exile/diaspora theology (137ff). That theology was worked out as one understood the concepts of neighbor, friend and brother; it was a theology which considered mixed marriages; in general, the concern was about maintaining purity, in the midst of a foreign land – a purity that was to be viewed as “nonconformity.” Apart from “diasporic nonconformity”, Smith-Christopher talks about a diasporic morality, diasporic ethics, included in which is diasporic nonviolence (187), which might resonate with a section of I Peter. Smith-Christopher goes further:

...exile is not merely a suggested paradigm, but a radically sobering diagnosis for the present reality of Christian existence in the world. It would be a fascinating historical exercise to debate whether Christians should ever have wielded the kind of secular and military power that they once had but the debate would not matter with regard to present realities...How ought modern Christians cope with this loss of power? (191)

Peter might answer Smith-Christopher's question, by pointing to his first letter, to 2:9-3:7; 4:1-19 and 5:1-11 in particular. Smith-Christopher warns that the Christian response has been to raise “our voice rather than sharpening our

analysis...doing theology by megaphone"! There may be those ready to argue that this has probably been the case in America, especially the kind that has been merged with American politics since the watershed events forever to be known as 9/11 and gay marriage. Smith-Christopher continues:

...The viability of a radical Christian community in the modern world is not a return to some pristine past – which was not often so pristine if we are honest readers of church history. We look back for moral guidance, not blueprints or cast-iron molds. By reflecting on the biblical witness of exile, we learn that we are in Babylon, not Jerusalem. Jerusalem has too often served as the capital of our imagined powerful "Christian" state from which we may impose our will on others. That was Constantine's, and our, mistake (194).

It is the observation of this study that in fact Peter takes the opposite approach as he writes the Christians in Asia-Minor. It is this same position of dispossession that DCC "bring" to the table, neither as power-seekers nor as powerbrokers in the traditional sense, but in the way Jesus demonstrated, according to I Peter 2:21-24; 3:18ff; 4:12-19. Smith-Christopher asserts that the way in which American Christians must work this out is by "disengaging from the myth of the dominant 'Christian nation'" (194). He suggests that, "a theology of abandoning Constantine, and Constantinian exegetical models of doing biblical theology, is to assert a postcolonialist, as well as exilic, biblical theology" (195).

Smith-Christopher, not unlike Boring, also includes mission in the theology of diaspora.

To be a diaspora people is to be a people of mission. Redefining ourselves as a people of social, but not violent worldly, power, is to redefine the very meaning of power, but it is also to redefine the meaning of mission. Our gospel is not based on the influence of our 'get out the vote' campaigns, but rather in the integrity of our faith and practice (200-201).

He adds, "to be a diaspora church means that there is no longer any discernible difference between missiology and ecclesiology" (202). He maintains that the idea of Christianity as a minority has been overlooked in modern Christianity. He contends that Jesus declared that his kingdom was not of this world (John 18:36); Paul warned that we don't wrestle against flesh and blood (Eph. 6:12); Peter writes from "Babylon" (I Peter 5:13); and John refers to the transience of this world (Rev. 14:8). He insists that all this must be taken beyond the spiritualized, "charismatic emotion" mode to which they too often tend to be relegated. They must be taken to mean the social reality of the Christian in the world today (201). With reference to the charges of atheism that Asia-Minor pagans leveled against Asia-Minor Christians (because the latter rejected the pagan and state gods) Smith-Christopher charges that it is rare to find Christians today who exemplify "political atheism" towards the "gods of the state" (201)! He warns about the trend of the religious right in America today jostling for political power or at least, favor with political machinery. There may be agreement from many across America today who have observed how huge segments of the American Church have mobilized themselves politically in the

last national elections of 2000 and 2004, to vote – unwisely, some would add – on a one-issue matter, disregarding other major issues to their peril and the peril of others.

Sub-Theme 2: Christians In Exilic Conditions

Stanley Hauerwas and William H. Willimon address this matter extensively in *Resident Aliens: Life In The Christian Colony*. Their intention and message are evident from the outset: “We believe that the designation of the church as a colony and Christians as resident aliens are not too strong for the modern American church – indeed, we believe it is the nature of the church, at any time and in any situation, to be a colony” (12). All first-generation legal Caribbean immigrants in the US know the experience of being literally “resident aliens” – at least for 5 years, until they become eligible for citizenship. (Indeed, citizenship doesn’t automatically remove the feeling or stigma of being an alien.) For the illegal alien, the period is longer and indefinite. That Hauerwas and Willimon’s message is congruent with I Peter’s is also evident: “Christians can survive only by supporting one another through the countless small acts through which we tell one another we are not alone, that God is with us” (12-13). How close this is to what Peter says (in 5:9)! They define “resident alien”:

The church exists today as resident aliens, an adventurous colony in a society of unbelief. As a society of unbelief, Western culture is devoid of a sense of journey, or adventure, because it lacks belief in much more than the

cultivation of an ever-shrinking horizon of self-preservation and self-expression (49).

The burden of the book is to make a case for how the American church is to conduct itself ethically. Indeed, the duo of authors writes, “Christian ethics are church-dependent” (71). They present the Christian church in America as being in hostile territory. That was so 20 yrs ago when Hauerwas and Willimon wrote it, and it is clearly the case today. (The student is unable to miss the observation that this is the same kind of society in which Peter’s readers lived.) In espousing this, they examine the Sermon on the Mount, and declare,

Nowhere in the Sermon are believers encouraged to abandon this life or the world. Rather, we are to see the world aright, to grab hold of the world wisely. The world is a place of trial and testing for disciples, but also a place of great opportunity for serving the ‘least of these’ and thereby serving Christ (87).

Doubtless, Willimon and Hauerwas must know how powerfully this concurs with Peter’s messages to his readers about coping with suffering, trials and testing. They warn against the church becoming a “conspiracy of cordiality” (138):

Paganism is the air we breathe, the water we drink. It captures us, it converts our young, it subverts the church.... Our world recognizes the subversive nature of the Christian faith and subverts us either by ignoring us or by giving us the freedom to be religious – as long as we keep religion a matter of personal choice (151-2).

Again, this agrees with First Peter, understood by many to be designed to be subversive. Willimon and Hauerwas explore Eph. 5:21, a proper exegesis of

which should agree with I Peter 3:1ff. Part of their reflection explains: “Scholars agree that this is not a text about women’s submission in a strange new social arrangement called the church” (152). And then, “in the oddest of ways, the Gospel brings about a head-on collision with many of our culture’s most widely held and deeply believed values. Being a Christian is not natural or easy” (153).

Sub-Theme 3: Preaching In Exilic Conditions

Walter Brueggemann (*Cadences of Home, Preaching Among Exiles*) urges “that preaching in the US church, in a cultural condition of post-Christendom, is analogous to preaching to exiles” (78). He suggests the following: that (1) exiles must grieve their loss (what they left behind); (2) exiles are “rootless”, “motherless” and “orphaned”; (3) exiles should beware the power of despair; (4) exile may be viewed as “profaned absence” – the absence of God; (5) exile is “an experience of moral incongruity”; (6) “there is danger for the exile to become self-focused to the extent that possibilities for rethinking, reimagining and reengineering (presumably) one’s self and/or situation might be forfeited (4-11). Brueggemann also suggests that preachers’ theme to exiles should include homecoming, assurance, “doxologies of defiance” and God’s promise (14-22). Brueggemann suggests further that preaching is reimagination, offering 16 theses regarding preaching in a new “cultural context”, including the issue of pluralism. In the midst of this pluralism the “interpreting community” has know how to interpret the biblical text.

The reimagination of which Brueggemann speaks has to do with the fact that the current preaching situation is one that is changed from the “old modes of church absolutes”; it has to do with the fact that reality is “scripted...shaped and authorized by a text” and not the opposite. It has to do with the fact that the biblical text offers an “alternative script” and that preaching through that text is to imagine how the world can be through the eyes of that alternative script – that it is to determine in the “here and now” what that alternative script means to and for us. Finally, it has to do with the fact that preaching is imagination that engages the use of perception and experience so as to reimagine, reinterpret and reorganize faith for the current experience in exile (24-34). Brueggemann extols the power of the biblical script:

The invitation of preaching...is to abandon the script in which one has had confidence and to enter a different script that imaginatively tells one's life differently...The offer of an alternative script...invites the listener out of his or her assumed context into many alternative contexts where different scripts may have a ring of authenticity and credibility (34-35).

The “alternative” and “different” text, in both cases, are the biblical text, which calls the exiles back from the current challenges and troubles in exile – that is, the “script” or “text” of their “assumed context.” Brueggemann clarifies this by saying that, “The ‘place’ wherein I know myself to be living is not the only place where I could live” (35).

This is a powerful formula for preachers ministering to people in exile or diaspora. Brueggemann suggests that there are three ways people of God in exile may respond to their situation (especially when they think God is distant. (1) They may respond in assimilation – to adopt, capitulate to and join the dominant culture and values, thus losing their identity. (2) They may respond in despair for the loss of the past. This in turn could lead to the illusion that their current lot is permanent (especially if it is a spiritually interpreted exile). (3) They may respond with “fresh, imaginative theological work, recovering the old theological traditions and recasting them in terms appropriate to the new situation of faith in an alien culture” (116).

Brueggemann advises that the new imaginative activity shouldn't seek to be new in content or thought forms, but that it should reflect the dilemmas, displacement, challenges and situations found in the land of exile so that “fresh ways of faith” may be found (117). He suggests that the poetry of biblical passages like Job and deutero-Isaiah may be helpful in forming this new imaginative activity. He says that in order to survive exile without succumbing to either assimilation or despair, the exile must among other things, resist coziness with the “new empire”, which resistance will itself push the exile toward “dangerous criticism” of that empire's “destructive seduction...that is too often covered over by euphemism” (121). The exiles must resist “(living) themselves into the story of Babylon and...reidentify themselves as citizens of

Babylon" (121). Citing Isaiah, he identifies religious critique and political critique as components of that "dangerous criticism" (121-123). He adds that living out "dangerous promises" is, as well, part of the survival technique of the exile (the dangerous promises are the sovereign faithfulness of Yahweh). The end result is that not merely a new song – but a *dangerous* new song – is sung (126). That new, new song comprises the old, old story (129). Entertaining dangerous memories, eating dangerous bread (Is. 55:1), and making dangerous departures (Is. 52:11-12) complete a list of what he calls "disciplines of readiness" (118-134). Brueggemann proposes, "that in our preaching...we ponder the interface of our circumstance of exile...and scriptural resources that grew from and address the faith crisis of exile" (3). Striking a defiant note, he advises, further, that,

Exile did not lead Jews in the Old Testament to abandon faith or to settle for abdicating despair, not to retreat to privatistic religion. On the contrary, exile evoked the most brilliant literature and the most daring theological articulation in the Old Testament...(it was) a buoyant response to trouble (3).

Finally, he submits that, "preaching a biblical text among...exiles is precisely a...practice...that is essential to the maintenance of identity..."(74), and that during exile, "the temptations to cultural syncretism and the disappearance of a distinct identity (are) acute" (104).

Sub-Theme 4: Issues on Preacher Consciousness

If diasporic preachers bear in mind that their Christian audiences are called to mission and that each person therein has a gift to enable him in ministry (I Peter 4:10-11), then they should be able to accept that “Pastors discover their particular ministerial vocation only as pastors discover the ministry of all Christians” (Willimon and Hauerwas 118). Interestingly, this duo’s book ends with a discourse on preachers’ faithfulness in preaching – that it is not to be their own opinion, but should be what they have been told to preach from the authority of the Word. “Tragically, many of us are trying to preach without Scripture and to interpret Scripture without the church” (163).

William Watty, using Ecclesiastes as “a parable of civilizations and cultures”, is certain that eventually, culture will wear out (1981, 64). Perhaps this should point a study like this to investigate whether preaching, among Diasporic Caribbean Christians is not so much to maintain Caribbean cultures as to respect them and through them reach the Caribbean man and woman and meaningfully minister to them. It might lead to an investigation whether preaching is to maintain Caribbean theology, which while it too is subject to change, the God, which it seeks to understand and express, remains the same. Preachers to DCC need to be aware also of that reality because it applies to the culture in which they and the audience live. The great superpower of America needs be aware that just like the great kingdoms and powers of Assyria, Greece, Persia, Babylon,

Rome which have come and gone in the passing parade of cultures (and now, some might argue, England and Europe are “teetering on the edge” [65]), so too America should not smugly comfort herself that she and her culture will be around forever. Preachers in America need to see this and let the implications of that knowledge sink in and help determine the focus of their preaching. It must be preaching that does not pander to popular culture. It must be preaching that is theocentric rather than culturecentric. It must be preaching that lifts up the Creator rather than the culture. It must be preaching that lifts up the Creator rather than the creatures that created the cultures.

In the publication, *A Peculiar Prophet; William H. Willimon and the Art of Preaching*, contributing author Fleming Rutledge describes Willimon as (1) a preacher of fearless sermons (striking at the heart of sacred cows like “positive thinking” and a host of other post-modern “fuzziness”); (2) a preacher of theological sermons; (3) a preacher of thoughtful (thinking) sermons; and (4) a preacher of radical sermons who seeks conversion, more than “entertainment, amusement, shock or even challenge, in the usual sense of that word” (36). Willimon’s sermon, in that volume, “Flag and Cross, Cross and Flag” in the chapter entitled “Resident Aliens: ‘Christianity Is Weird, Odd, Peculiar’” (42-49), demonstrates these components of his preaching. It is certain that many aspects of this sermon would disturb many in the American pew; yet, it is the kind of preaching that would be, in the mind of the author, faithful today. Peter Gomes,

in the same volume, says of Willimon: “He understands, emphatically as well as etymologically, that tradition is a verb and not a noun, and thus those who are “traditioned” to use the word as Tertullian would use it, are both fundamentally changed and agents of change” (66-67). This study submits that this might be a good description of anyone who preaches Peter’s message.

Steve Brown, Haddon Robinson and William Willimon bring out in their book *A Voice In the Wilderness: Clear Preaching in a Complicated World*, the inseparability of the preacher’s life experiences and his or her message. They accomplish this by telling their own brief life stories at the beginning, and insert those life glimpses all the way through every anecdote and experience they relate in the rest of the book. This simple reminder buttresses the notion that Diasporic Caribbean Preachers – that is, those born and bred in the Caribbean – have experiences that may land them in the same place of “experiential authority” as Peter was (in “Babylon”), when he wrote the Christians in Asia-Minor.

An Investigation Among Diasporic Caribbean Christians

Two questionnaires were developed to explore some assumptions and theories about Diasporic Caribbean Christians’ attitudes to and thoughts about preaching in diasporic conditions. From the beginning, the intention was to survey preachers and church members, all from churches where Caribbean immigrant membership and leadership is prominent. At first, one questionnaire

was designed, but it became clear that a slightly different one was needed for pastor-preachers. Many of the questions, even where worded differently, converge, and a composite answer is often possible. The questionnaire was designed sometime after the literature review began; had it been designed after that process was completed, it might have been a different questionnaire in many ways.

Seventeen preachers from New York, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Florida and California were targeted. All are of Caribbean origin, ministering in American congregations. The members of most of these churches were targeted as well. Regrettably, the pastoral response could have been far better – only a 35% return rate – quite small given the sample size. Of 115 member questionnaires distributed, 31 returned, despite employing trusted “middlemen” (the selfsame pastoral colleagues targeted, all known personally to this writer!), self-addressed, self-stamped envelopes, and multiple telephone calls with reminders. The results of the collation of all the data may be found in the appendix. What follows is an outline of the major findings of the questionnaires.

1. Less than half (41.3%) of Diasporic Caribbean Christians (DCC) understand themselves to be resident in a diasporic situation. Eighty-three percent of Diasporic Caribbean Pastors in America (hereinafter, “pastors”) agree that they live in diasporic conditions (Pastor

Questionnaire, Question #1 – PQ1). On the other hand, 65% of parishioners (hereinafter, “members”) disagree (Membership Questionnaire, Question #1 – MQ1)! This is particularly disturbing. It may be that the definition or meaning of “diaspora” (as Caribbean immigrants) was unclear to the respondents, or that “diaspora” connotes something with which many Caribbean immigrants do not want to associate. It is reasonable to infer the former, based on the answers returned for all of the subsequent questions, especially (MQ10, 11, 12, 14). Evidently the questionnaire suffered from a design flaw in that it ought to have provided a definition of “diaspora.”

2. The majority of pastors (67%) preach to immigrant members with a consciousness of them as immigrants (PQ2a). (The desire of this study is to have that number moved to 100%). The preachers who preached with this diasporic consciousness report that the following factors are what adjust their focus: the issues, the language, the choice of biblical texts, the illustrations and the theology (PQ2b).
3. There is some disagreement among DCCs that they need a different kind of sermon that takes note of their identity. More preachers (than the 67% that preached with a consciousness of Caribbean immigrants as diasporic people) agreed that diasporic Christians did need a special kind of

sermon. A total of 80% saw it this way (PQ3a). Only a quarter of all parishioners agreed however that they need a special or different kind of sermon than what Americans need; one-tenth were neutral, and the rest disagreed (MQ2). Their answer is clearly related to the fact that the majority declined to view themselves as diasporic (MQ1). Pastors agree that in order to make their sermons peculiar to a diasporic audience, their focus and content (83%), their style (67%) and the theology (50%) and hermeneutics (33%) would all need to change. Seventeen percent thought that the sermon structure would need adjustment also (PQ3b). An experienced homiletician would probably be happy that this number is in the minority.

4. All pastors noted some kind of change in their preaching in America, compared to their preaching in the Caribbean, if only in their recognition that they now live in a different context (PQ4a, b). Fifty percent of pastors report that they did not pastor a non-Caribbean (or Caribbeans-in-minority) church in America before their current (or past) immigrant-laden church. Forty percent report preaching differently in the two different situations (PQ14).
5. Pastors caution that DCC should not allow their Caribbean identity, experience and orientation to become lost while in diaspora (PQ5). This is

a clear warning against assimilation. On this same question (about anything members may have witnessed in preaching in the USA that they would consider inappropriate or inadequate for them as Caribbean Christians) the non-preachers have a lot more to say (MQ4). The 81.3% that answered with useful comments offered answers that fit into seven broad categories: (i) an overemphasis on money in sermons: 18.8%; (ii) the general unspiritual behavior of preachers: 9.4%; (iii) an improper focus on trivia while in the pulpit: 9.4%; (iv) inadequate exegesis or biblical grounding of the sermon: 9.4%; (v) unattractive sermon presentation: 6.2%; (vi) too much emphasis on race issues: 6.2%; (vii) inadequate spiritual emphases in the sermon: 3.1%. What this bears out is the need for (a) bible-centered sermons, born of astute and faithful exegesis; (b) attention to the essentials and dismissal of the trivial; (c) careful sermon presentation and (d) sensitivity while dealing with ethnic and diasporic issues (so that no one may correctly or incorrectly come away with the feeling that it was being improperly treated or unduly race-oriented).

6. Most DCC have never had membership in a church in America where Caribbean immigrants were a minority and disliked the preaching. But 38.7% have (MQ8a). The reasons for this disappointment displeasure raise some serious concerns. Heading the list is insufficient theological, exegetical and biblical content (one-third of the responses), followed by

other homiletical issues (20%), then by cultural and ethnic insensitivities (20%). Credibility issues come in at 13.3%. About 64% of DCC believe that Caribbean immigrants in the USA demonstrate the Christian faith in ways that are distinguishable from American Christians (PQ7a, MQ6a). As for reasons DCC think this way, there are six categories, including the following highlights: (i) that the Caribbean Christian faith is developed in (more) austere physical, social and material conditions than Americans generally have to face; (ii) that Caribbean Christian faith permeates through the whole fabric of Caribbean life (for example, a respondent says, "Caribbean church life is wrapped up in the whole fabric of life; in America it often appears more 'by the way'"); (iii) Caribbean Christians attitude and commitment to their faith is greater; (iv) the content of what Caribbean Christians learned is "meatier" than some Americans appear to have learned. It might be argued that some of this is quite subjective, and indeed, this is the way of many opinions expressed in surveys. However, any reputable source of socio-economic statistics may well bear out that at least in regard to (i) above, DCC may well have a salient point. What all this all bears out is that DCC feel strongly about their faith and feel that they are in a situation perhaps somewhat like the Asia-Minor Christians where they are conscious that their faith may appear "unusual" to their neighbors. It should be noted, however, that 17% of the pastors lament insufficient DCC commitment to service in and through the local church,

and an inadequate appetite for the teaching of the Word, compared to what was observed in the Caribbean (PQ5). This is a reasonable observation despite its not being repeated by the majority.

7. As far as the *cultural* issues that DCC think their preachers should address are concerned, among the pastors, homeland distinctives such as language (accents), music and patriotism shared the top place with spiritual issues (30% each). Preachers of Caribbean origin consider Caribbean people to be equally conscious spiritually as they are culturally. It is notable that the preachers are also conscious of the prominent place their history has in their theology (PQ8). The parishioners/members on the other hand, demonstrate that DCC are integration-savvy or at least integration-alert. Nearly 40% of those offering an answer to this question (MQ7) registered an integration-related issue as their concern. There were only three other major categories of issues they identified, demonstrating that integration is foremost in the mind of diasporic Caribbean people as issues they need addressed in the pulpit.

8. Pastors and members were also asked what problems or challenges (apart from cultural concerns) they thought they should address or have addressed from their pulpits. The pastors considered issues of prejudice and injustice, integration concerns and socio-economic issues as

important. One unique response was “America’s role in world affairs” (PQ9). This could suggest that there may be a missionary role for diasporic Christians in America, related to shaping the way America understands and shapes its global relationships and perspectives. The version of the question for church members sought to determine what they thought their preachers should bear in mind when they prepared to preach to them *as Caribbean immigrants*. To begin, 17.5% bear the opinion that no distinction need be made between Americans and DCC as preachers prepare their sermons. An equal percentage, however, want the preacher to consider their Caribbean heritage (MQ5)! A sizeable number (40%) reveals that faith issues and their biblical and spiritual development ought to be at the heart of their preachers’ preparation. Other concerns are integration matters (8.6% of responses), socio-economic problems (5.7%), challenges to morality (2.9%) and – as might be expected of a diasporic situation when one bears First Peter in mind – coping with struggles and suffering (despite the meager 5.7%). In the same breath, pastors, responding to the question (PQ10) about the kind of theological, religious and biblical issues they thought they should address in their sermons included the following (i) “assurance that the same God from the Caribbean is with them here in the USA”; (ii) “hope...”; (iii) “the meaning of community”; (iv) “mission to the world and to the homeland.” It is noticeable that the first of the four resonates with the experience of the OT

exiles and the “scattered” Asia-Minor Christians, as well as has potential for the “reconfiguration” (Brueggemann) of their reality. All of the others have grounding in First Peter – hope (1:3ff), community (4:9ff; 5:1-5) and mission (2:11-3:7). There is an ethical component that should not be overlooked among the concerns the preachers raise. It comprises 20% of the answers regarding cultural concerns (PQ8), and is 30% of the answers offered regarding the theological-biblical concerns Caribbean immigrants need to have addressed in their pulpit ministry (PQ10). Specifically, the concern is that DCC understand doctrine that would hold them steady in a pluralistic and fluid society. They need to be able to assess, evaluate and distinguish between what is culturally described and what is ethically prescribed in the Bible.

9. DCC list ten broad areas of concern in response to the question (MQ3) of what problems or challenges they face that their church’s pulpit ministry should address: (i) 12.7% of the answers focused on integration issues. It is remarkable that this heads the list. Caribbean Christians are concerned – as Peter was – about community. (ii) A similar percentage identifies economics and social issues, warning preachers that their ministry has to be balanced, touching material and social needs while attending to the spiritual. (iii) Immigration issues (11%), (iv) morality issues (11%), (v) spiritual concerns (9%), (vi) church and community issues (9.1%) (vii)

family concerns (7.3%); (viii) justice (5.4%); (ix) homeland issues – respecting and not forgetting “roots” (3.6%) and (x) other general difficulties complete the list.

10. Both diasporic Caribbean preachers and church members were presented with a series of possibilities arising from First Peter, and asked if these applied to them (PQ11, MQ13). The pastors registered higher agreement overall for each possibility, over the church members. The composite “scores” are: (i) they suffer because of their faith or Caribbean identity (50%); (ii) they consider themselves in possession of a heavenly inheritance (56%); (iii) they recognize they have to fit into a foreign culture and society as part of their Christian responsibility (73%); (iv) they suffer as “underdogs”(65%); (v) they consider themselves to be among a special people and heritage – their fellow Caribbean immigrants (70%); (vi) they understand that they have to maintain Christian integrity in a culture that is hostile to their faith (81%). All of these responses suggest a kinship between the scenario in I Peter and among DCC today.

11. Showing consistency with their answer for the last “possibility” in question 13 (MQ13), 81% of DCC express the feeling that they are in a “pagan” society in America (MQ14a). Seventy-one percent report that their church’s pulpit ministry helps them to cope with this diasporic

reality (MQ14b). The fact that 29% reports to the contrary makes a case for sharpening the preaching ministry to diasporic Christians.

12. When asked if there was anything about *American* culture or religion that they would advise their parishioners or loved ones against adopting or assimilating into their lifestyles, the members had a larger number of answers (MQ9), compared to the pastors' (PQ12). The pastors' chief answers are (i) the permissiveness of American society; (ii) the "false trappings attending the idea of being a 'super-power' resident"; (iii) the prosperity gospel; (iv) "over-emotionalism" (in worship); (v) inferiority – "the fear of disagreeing with white perspectives"; (vi) agnosticism about truth and moral absolutes and (vi) the rugged individualism that militates against neighborliness and community. The members' many answers are streamlined into six categories: (i) materialism – 35.7%; (ii) "churchiness" rather than true spirituality – 16.7%; (iii) criminal company and lifestyle – 12%; (iv) the conduct, choices and company that otherwise lessen and threaten faith – 12%; (v) general undesirables and (vi) "underestimating one's cultural worth."

13. With a different focus, when asked about the *Caribbean* values that they would encourage Caribbean immigrants to maintain, it is significant that "Caribbean values" translate into faith issues (47% of pastors' responses –

PQ13a) and spirituality, faith and church issues (36% of membership responses – MQ10)! It may reasonably be concluded that DCC have a faith (Christian) identity and a cultural identity that appear inseparable. 100% of pastors (PQ13b) and 84% of members believe that diasporic Caribbean people are losing these Caribbean values in America. When asked specifically about the aspects of *Caribbean faith* that they would like to see retained in America, pastors say biblical knowledge and theological maturity (60% of answers – PQ15).

14. More Diasporic Caribbean Christians suffer for their status as immigrants than those who suffer for their faith; yet, some *do* suffer for their faith (MQ12). No diasporic pastor reported suffering for his faith (PQ16). “Suffering” is qualified as “ostracism, misunderstanding, prejudice or disadvantage – economic, social or otherwise.” A foreign accent was the most frequent cause of “suffering” for both pastors and people. Ethnic and faith differences come in second for people, with unfair and untrue assumptions, deprivation of academic or employment benefits, origin and skin color, immigration status and unfriendly church members complete the list both questionnaires supply.

SUMMARY

Arising from the analysis of the data, the following observations can therefore be made.

- (i) Less than half of Diasporic Caribbean Christians (DCC) understand themselves to be resident in a diasporic situation. There is evidence that the definition or meaning of “diaspora” may have been unclear to the respondents. Diasporic Caribbean Pastors in America agree that they live in diasporic conditions.
- (ii) There is some disagreement among DCCs that they need a different kind of sermon that takes note of their identity.
- (iii) DCC affirm that DCC should not allow their Caribbean identity, experience and orientation to become lost while in diaspora (via assimilation as opposed to integration).
- (iv) Caribbean people are equally conscious spiritually as they are culturally. Diasporic Caribbean preachers are conscious of the prominent place their history has in their theology. Rather than making them insular or clannish, this makes DCC integration-savvy and integration-alert.
- (v) Diasporic Caribbean Christians are deeply concerned about community – both the ones they left behind and the new ones that need to be formed where they are.

- (vi) DCC understand that they have to maintain Christian integrity in a culture that is hostile to their faith. They feel that they are in a “pagan” society in America, and report that their church’s pulpit ministry helps them to cope with this diasporic reality.
- (vii) More Diasporic Caribbean Christians suffer for their status as immigrants than they do for their faith; yet, some *do* suffer for their faith.
- (viii) DCC are wary of some parts of *American* culture and religion, chiefly the permissiveness of American society and the materialism that attends both society and religion. They also perceive, in American religion, a “churchiness” rather than true spirituality.
- (ix) DCC equate “Caribbean values” with faith issues. They have a faith (Christian) identity and a cultural identity that appear to be inseparable.
- (x) DCC believe that Caribbean immigrants in the USA demonstrate the Christian faith in ways that are distinguishable from American Christians, chiefly because of the austere physical, social and material conditions that incubated Caribbean Christian faith, and because of the content of Caribbean Christian education and theology. Some diasporic Caribbean pastors warn though, that they have seen “greater faith” back in the Caribbean.

- (xi) Diasporic Caribbean Pastors preach to immigrant members with a consciousness of them as immigrants. They have noted some kind of change in their preaching in America, compared to their preaching in the Caribbean.
- (xii) Caribbean immigrants have witnessed preaching in the USA that they consider inappropriate or inadequate. They have encountered improper pulpit/sermon/preacher focus and emphasis, insufficient theological, exegetical and biblical content, other homiletical flaws and cultural and ethnic insensitivities in some American pulpits. These encounters have often resulted in the cessation of their attendance at such churches.
- (xiii) DCC firmly believe that faith issues and their biblical and spiritual development ought to be at the heart of their preachers' preparation, and expect sermons that grow out of robust theological and biblical discipline.
- (xiv) Diasporic pastors are concerned that Caribbean immigrants grow in their faith so as to navigate the pluralistic, relativist society in which they live, with their morality and Christian ethic and ethics intact.

Chapter Four

Preaching To Diasporic Caribbean Christians: *What New Literature May Be Introduced About It?*

THESIS PROJECT: A BOOK OUTLINE

Proposed Book Title:
"THE DIASPORIC PREACHER"
Preaching to Diasporic Caribbean Christians in America"

Introduction to the Book

This is a critical document that would define the author's working definition of "Caribbean", and which would concede the limitations of his definition, given the vastness and variety of Caribbean peoples, cultures, ethnicities, and some would even argue, theologies. The introduction would also clarify why First Peter is used as the theological-biblical basis for the book over against other apparently more convincing and suitable (to the reader) passages (Joseph's family migrating to Egypt, to name one). Thirdly the introduction would give an overview of the flow and progress of the book, setting the tone for continuity and cohesion, given the broad sweep and scope (in the mind of the feedback group referred to in Chapter 5) of the book. It would be necessary also, to point out that "America", in this book, except where it so designates, means the United States of America.

SECTION I

CHAPTER ONE

“Identity, Identity, Identity!”

1. We are “Caribbean”, not “West Indian”!
 - (a) Columbus’ miscalculations led to the misnomer “West Indies”;
 - (b) It is time to sever ties with the misnomer;
 - (c) It is time to return to a name that is based, instead, on a fact – the name “Caribbean.”

2. Caribbean Immigrants are not African Americans, nor are their experiences necessarily the same as African Americans:
 - (a) Slavery in the Caribbean was abolished (emancipation) years ahead of slavery in America;
 - (b) The Caribbean, despite not being a homogeneous society, is a place where blackness is celebrated, and taken as normal;
 - (c) In the Caribbean, Blacks rise to political prominence, civil prominence and social prominence, chiefly because they are not a minority grouping there, and partly because Caribbean standards of education in the English-speaking territories are generally high, being patterned on the British system (they may be described as “third-world” territories with “first world” education);

- (d) A fairly extensive number of Caribbean people have land ownership;
- (e) The above factors render Caribbean immigrants decidedly different from African Americans and have been known to create tension between the two people-groups.

3. Who are Caribbean Immigrants?

- (a) They are twice displaced – once from Africa through Middle Passage (as well as from India) to the Caribbean; once from the Caribbean to America – explore how so;
- (b) They are twice abused – once by the people in the new “home” who misunderstand them or hold them in suspicion; once by those in the homeland who question their patriotism, their rights, and even their integrity. Cite columnist Dawn Ritch’s article in Jamaica Gleaner, June 25, 2006, excoriating the Jamaican Diaspora as having no stake or right to voice concerns about Jamaica – explore how so;
- (c) They are twice Gentiles – once in the literal sense (as opposed to being Jews) and once as social outcasts – not the “chosen” ones – in the new land – explore how so.

4. Caribbean Theology has helped shape Caribbean Christian Identity:

- (a) It has enabled clear articulation of Caribbean identity;
- (b) It has heightened awareness of the Caribbean experience as “biblical” (likening it to the sojourn of Israel in Egypt and then as a colony in Babylon);
- (c) It has articulated a Caribbean faith shaped by a Caribbean identity and experience;
- (d) It has spotlighted and exposed disadvantages regarding missionary theology that have impacted negatively on the Caribbean Church;
- (e) It has spotlighted and exposed disadvantages regarding the underdevelopment to which the Caribbean Church has been subjected by colonial missionary agents;
- (f) It has instilled pride in Caribbean culture, heritage, faith, and sophistication;
- (g) It has taught Caribbean Christians how to “re-imagine” and “re-interpret” Scriptures long before Brueggemann coined those terms! This was once known as contextualization;
- (h) It portrays a high view of women, depicting them as strong;
- (i) It has engendered a high level of theological engagement even among some laypersons;
- (j) It has encouraged Caribbean people to celebrate their “own thing”;

- (k) It has produced high levels of theological engagement in some Caribbean pulpits;
- (l) It has yielded political thought and rhetoric that is decidedly biblical.

5. Caribbean family life and Caribbean Christian education have contributed to shaping Caribbean Christian identity:

- (a) Caribbean Christian immigrants claim a deep faith honed from childhood and strong parental involvement in early Christian Education (questionnaire);
- (b) Caribbean Christian immigrants believe their faith, in diaspora, is distinguishable from others' (questionnaire);
- (c) Caribbean Christian immigrants place a high premium on Caribbean family values, child-rearing and faith retention;
- (d) Caribbean Christian education has yielded high levels of articulation of the faith;
- (e) Caribbean Christian education has resulted in high standards of expectation of the pulpit from the pew.

6. Caribbean Christians' cultural identity and faith identity appear inseparable (questionnaire).

7. Diasporic Caribbean Christians (DCC) Have a Biblical Antecedent!
 - (a) The Caribbean Christian Diaspora in America may claim First Peter as a its “theological parent”;
 - (b) Segue to an Introduction of First Peter.

CHAPTER TWO

“Peter’s World and Ours”

1. Pursue a discourse on Peter’s 1st Century Asia-Minor and Our 21st

Century America:

- (a) Present snapshots of Asia-Minor in Peter’s time;
- (b) Present snapshots of today’s America – match with I Peter 2:5-6.

2. Pursue a discourse on Peter’s Readers and Diasporic (Caribbean)

Christians:

- (a) Are Peter’s readers Jewish or Gentile recipients? – An overview of thought development;
- (b) Discuss how either group is eligible to be designated “alien.”

3. Pursue a discourse on Jesus as an alien-outsider.

4. Why did the Asia-Minor Christians suffer?

- (a) Was it due to Roman atrocities?
- (b) Discuss the suspicion, prejudice, ostracism, verbal abuse they suffered;

- (c) Discuss the false accusations they endured before unfriendly courts;
- (d) Discuss the commercial disadvantages they were likely to endure;
- (e) Discuss how their Christian identity was at the heart of the sufferings that Peter addressed.

5. Discuss the social environment in Asia-Minor:

- (a) Slavery was commonplace: it was nothing like 18th and 19th century slavery in the Americas;
- (b) Discuss the social polarities in Asia-Minor;
- (c) Discuss Industrialization and its human impact;
- (d) Take note of the high educational standards in Asia-Minor;
- (e) Explore the impact of religious pluralism upon the ethos of the society;
- (f) Explore the impact of religious pluralism upon the Christians;
- (g) Explore the impact of cultural pluralism (Greek, Romans, Gentiles, Jews, etc) upon the Christians and the society;
- (h) Explore “big” government in Asia-Minor – that is, the overarching role of the Roman State and explore similarities with American government today;
- (i) Compare Asia-Minor and America in the areas of travel and culture and their impact on knowledge and thought;

- (j) Consider the impact that all the above may have on the devaluation of Asia-Minor people's value and worth.

6. What are the implications of all this for Diasporic Caribbean Christians (DCC)?

- (a) Some DCC are reluctant to even describe themselves as diasporic, even though they understand the foreignness of the situation in which they live (questionnaire);
- (b) Some DCC believe their faith, in diaspora, is distinguishable from others' (questionnaire);
- (c) DCC agree that their location in diaspora exposes them to a kind of "paganism"; yet it demands "fitting in", though not belonging;
- (d) DCC understand that in diaspora, there are trappings of the "new society" that should be kept at bay, and vestiges of the homeland that should be embraced and encouraged (questionnaire);
- (e) DCC *want* to retain the Caribbean identity.

CHAPTER THREE

“Diasporic Theology”

1. Diaspora, *per se*, is not the same as exile, *per se*.
2. Diaspora (in the case of Peter’s readers) is probably worse than the Jewish exile!
 - (a) Examine claims that the conditions of the Exile are overstated;
 - (b) Compare social conditions in Asia-Minor with Babylon, contrasting the encouragement many had to marry and settle in Babylon and the social ostracism Asia-Minors suffered.
3. Explore Smith-Christopher’s claim of diaspora as *paradigm* and as *diagnosis* (p.191) in relation to Christian engagement in the world – I Peter 2:9-3:7; 4:1-19; 5:1-11).
4. Diasporic theology is a minority theology – explore all biblical references that patently support this, including, but not limited to, John 18:36; Ephesians 6:12; I Peter).

5. Diasporic theology is a subversive theology – spiritually and missionally, but not politically.
6. Diasporic theology is a theology of mission.
7. Diasporic theology is a theology of mission by subversion (I Peter), not by ‘megaphone’ (Smith-Christopher).
8. Diasporic theology is a theology of trauma (suffering).
9. Diasporic theology is a theology of triumph *through* suffering:
 - (a) Jesus epitomized and blazed the trail in this matter (especially since he also was in “exile” when he executed his earthly mission).
10. Diasporic theology is a theology of identity:
 - (a) It is a spiritual identity that is involved;
 - (b) It is a national identity that is involved;
 - (c) It is a corporate identity that is involved.
11. Diasporic theology is a theology of neighborliness and responsibility:
 - (a) It involves a sense of responsibility to others;
 - (b) It involves caring for strangers;

- (c) It involves caring for neighbors;
- (d) It lies in the Mosaic Law – Exodus 22:21; 23:9; Leviticus 19:34;
- (e) It lies in the parable of the Samaritan neighbor – Luke 10:25-37;
- (f) Some DCC believe Caribbean neighborliness and care are endangered (questionnaire).

12. Diasporic theology emphasizes the community above the individual (questionnaire).

13. Diasporic theology is a theology of ‘non-conformity’ (Smith-Christopher, p.187) and non-violence.

14. Diasporic theology is a theology of dispossession (Smith-Christopher, p.194). It clashes with theologies of “possession” (such as prosperity theologies and the theologies of the “religious right”).

15. Examine the theology of the religious right in America today:

- (a) It is a theology of power-possession with the State rather than dispossession (Falwell, Dobson, Robertson, et al.);
- (b) It is a theology of triumphalism rather than of suffering;

- (c) It is a theology of “majority” rather than minority – where the State is sought to be controlled by religious will rather than Christians fitting in to a world that is a temporary passage;
 - (d) It is a theology of deficiency and expediency (Its subscribers indulge in one-issue voting, and may be said to engage in blind support of a dubious war in Iraq);
 - (e) This theology is combative rather than subversive:
 - i. It is combative politically;
 - ii. It is divisive ecclesiastically.
16. Explore the tenets of “prosperity theology” and say why this theology is opposed to diasporic theology and inimical to the subscribers of both theologies.

CHAPTER FOUR

“Diaspora and Suffering”

1. Aliens in diasporic conditions will encounter and endure suffering:
 - (a) There are social reasons for this suffering (questionnaire);
 - (b) There are ethnic reasons for this suffering;
 - (c) There may be religious and spiritual reasons for this suffering;
 - (d) There is a Christian imperative to suffer in diaspora;
 - (e) There are many responses to suffering:
 - i. There is the response of subversion – winning over the powers that be through submission and suffering;
 - ii. There is the response of jubilation – enduring suffering with a purposeful sense of victory and joy;
 - iii. There is the response of mission – accomplishing witness for Christ and respect for Christianity *through* suffering.

2. Jesus Christ suffered leaving an example for Diasporic Christians:
 - (a) Christ suffered as an alien;
 - (b) Christ accomplished mission through suffering;
 - (c) Christ did subversive work through his suffering (I Peter 2:7f).

3. Subordination, submission and subversion are a trinity of necessities for suffering Diasporic Christians:
 - (a) Peter called the Christians in Asia-Minor to this responsibility;
 - (b) This has similar implications for DCC – that they do likewise in their own context.
4. There is a motif of suffering in Peter's address to slaves (2:18-21), who must submit, even in suffering.
5. There is a motif of suffering in Peter's address to wives (3:1-7) who must submit even to unbelieving husbands (whose prerogative was to view their wives as property) – this might conceivably bring suffering.
6. There is a motif of submission in Peter's address to husbands.
7. There is a connection between Peter's understanding of submission and suffering as well as between eschatology and suffering.
8. There is a connection, in Peter's understanding, between the devil and suffering.

9. Immigration is an index of suffering:

- (a) Caribbean people immigrate because they encounter economic suffering;
- (b) Caribbean people immigrate because they suffer security problems;
- (c) Caribbean people immigrate because they suffer political problems;
- (d) By the time many Caribbean people migrate they have already suffered family separation and troubles, albeit, often by choice;
- (e) Some Caribbean Christians claim that their diasporic faith is as deep and distinguishable as it is because of the austere conditions in the Caribbean that honed it (questionnaire).

10. Immigration is a portal to Suffering:

- (a) Immigration opens the door to “alienship”;
- (b) Immigration brings the realities of displacement;
- (c) Immigration demands the rigors of adjustment.

11. Discuss Immigration Issues and Problems:

- (a) Immigration often presents/yields family problems:
 - i. Discuss the problems arising from single parenthood;
 - ii. Discuss the problem known as “barrel children”;
 - iii. Discuss the parent-child relationship problems that show up after the family reunites.

- (b) Born Americans – particularly African Americans – sometimes believe that immigrants have come to take away their patrimony, or at least their job (questionnaire);
- (c) Discuss the “push and pull” issues usually related to immigration;
- (d) Does anybody really flee (emigrate) voluntarily? Explore different reasons for refuge-seeking or immigrating so as to demonstrate that all forms of migration result from “push” or “pull”;
- (e) Immigration is, in one way or another, crisis-promoted, “crisis-infested” and crisis-propelled:
 - i. These crises are present in a political or crime-victim-refugee;
 - ii. These crises are present in a family immigrating for educational and economic reasons (the story of the Friday family and the crises involved in deciding to move, and then moving; include, also, the particular spiritual and ecclesiastical needs and challenges of the new immigrant Friday family);
- (f) Historically, less immigrants immigrate for the values of the new country; more immigrate for sheer survival (Lowenthal pp.213-214, Pocock, p.59-62);
- (g) Few Caribbean people, if any, immigrate for “American values”; most immigrate for economic survival, easier educational

opportunities, political security and escape from crime-ridden societies;

- (h) It used to be that in some parts of America, “black” was automatically interpreted as stupid (or poor, or inferior); there are still reports of this being existent (examples);
- (i) A foreign accent in America has deprived some immigrants of opportunities for progress (questionnaire);
- (j) Identification with the “third world” has also yielded disadvantages for some immigrants (questionnaire);
- (k) Caribbean immigrants (generally) have a knack for adapting readily in diaspora;
- (l) Illegal immigrants have lifestyle problems: they have a need to lie, hide, deceive, resulting often, in sub-standard lifestyles;
- (m) These sub-standard lifestyles may often lead to illegal ways to make a living, and the drug trade is a high draw for young men;
- (n) There has been a shift in the way Caribbean immigrants identify themselves (in the earlier part of the 20th century they identified more with African-Americans; after that, with other Caribbean immigrants);
- (o) Immigration puts loyalty to the test;
- (p) Immigration puts faith to the test (questionnaires);
- (q) Immigration puts morality to the test (Daniel 1-3; I Peter 2:11ff);

- (r) All the above (o-q) is equally true of natural (ethnic) immigrants as well as of spiritual ones;
- (s) The faithful who originate in the new land have a biblically required responsibility to the immigrants that arrive there (Chapter 3, 11d above);
- (t) The seduction of sub-cultures in the new land often results in changed lifestyles (especially for younger [male] immigrants):
 - i. Refer to Alfred Lam's D.Min. thesis;
 - ii. Refer to Neibuhr's "Christ and Culture";
 - iii. Refer to questionnaires' information;
 - iv. Tell the story of my observations of my own two sons' experience with the sub-cultures as immigrants;
- (u) Discuss other immigration issues as raised in questionnaires.

CHAPTER FIVE

“Diasporic (Caribbean) Christian Community”

1. The Diasporic church (congregation), in the context of this book, is not primarily a church made up of diasporic people, but one which *ministers* to diasporic people, whether it is a diasporic congregation or otherwise.
2. There is a need for diasporic Christians to forge a community in the new homeland:
 - (a) This community must occupy itself with the realities of diaspora;
 - (b) This community is not necessarily exclusive of non-diasporic people.
3. There is a need for a diasporic Christian community in which there is a deliberate attempt at integrating the Christians of ethnic diaspora with Christians whose origin is in the new homeland:
 - (a) Explore the nature of this community (use I Peter 2:9-10 as a guide);
 - (b) Discuss the importance of Christian faith in this community;
 - (c) Discuss the possible or potential hostility of the environment in which the community is to be forged;

- (d) Note the nature of the community as corporate, not individualistic
(and the implications thereof);
- (e) Note the tenets of community (using I Peter 5:1-7 as a guide);
- (f) The diasporic Christian community is meant to be an integrating
community:
 - i. We may not belong, but we have to get along!
 - ii. Does First Peter leave any room for an ethnic Caribbean
church or churches in America?
 - iii. DCC are not in the same situation as the Asia-Minor
Christians re their exclusive faith community (Grabbe);
 - iv. Does this call for an integrated church instead?
 - v. How biblical are purely ethnic churches? (Answer from the
perspective of I Peter);
- (g) "Tradition" (paradosis) is the life of the church and at the heart of
community;
- (h) Explore the death of tradition in a permissive world/society (partly
because "tradition" is misunderstood, being seen as a noun instead
of as a verb;
- (i) Examine the work of the Holy Spirit creating community (Acts 2;
Eph 4:1ff);
- (j) Explore the church's role of maintaining - not creating -
community (Acts 2; Eph 4).

4. Discuss the realities that Christians face in exilic conditions:

- (a) Christians are diasporic people, whether they are immigrants or not (Detwiler, p.60);
- (b) Christians are therefore, in significant ways, aliens too;
- (c) Christians are in the same boat as many ethnic immigrants (Griffin and Walker);
- (d) The church is a minority community (Rodney Clapp's quote and Brueggemann's "Always in the Shadow of the Empire");
- (e) The whole world is strange to believers – it is not home (Peter says that wherever he writes eschatologically);
- (f) The church is a colony in a society of unbelief (Hauerwas and Willimon, "Resident Aliens", p.12-13, 49);
- (g) The society and the Christian "colony" are at cross purposes;
- (h) The society is hostile territory, regardless of any goodwill the Church may enjoy (explore Acts 2:47 and how that quickly changes by 4:3!);
- (i) How bad, really, is the world (secular America)? Attempt to answer this by exploring several examples from news, current affairs, human experience, and more;
- (j) Explore and affirm what Griffin and Walker call the "ghettoization" of the world;

- (k) Explore the foreignness of “paganism” and the challenges, dangers and liabilities of liberalism to believers.

5. What should be the Response of Christians in exilic conditions?

- (a) Christianity must survive in “pagan” societies;
- (b) The Christian hope, values and objectives make Christianity sustainable in these conditions;
- (c) Explore the necessity of being a biblical community, shaped through the perspective of Scripture (what Brueggemann calls reimagining and reconfiguring present reality to future reality);
- (d) The response calls for being in the world but not of it – just what Jesus meant!
- (e) In the response there is a place for suffering but also for service;
- (f) How difficult, really, is it to be a Christian? (Show the implication of all this for the prosperity theology and “gospel”);
- (g) How, in the light of all the above, should DCC live?
 - i. Are they to avoid political activism?
 - ii. Are they to avoid civil-rights activism?
- (h) The response calls for humility, not hegemony! (Griffin & Walker);
- (i) Does the response involve seeking freedom (from persecution, dispossession, disfranchisement and more), or suffering freely (Hauerwas, *After Christendom*, p.53-54)?

(j) There are ways the Christian might cope in diaspora (de Jong, p.13-20);

(k) There needs to be astute and careful leadership in the diasporic Christian community (I Peter 5:1-5).

6. What should be the Responsibility of the Christian Church in diasporic conditions?

(a) Christian Community in Diaspora requires integration and assimilation:

i. A “Visit” to a (probably?) Diasporic Church: the New Life Baptist Church, in Bellevue, Nebraska:

- The church’s location and history predispose it to being diasporic:

- The church’s history in more than one location;

- Offutt Air Force Base – comprised of “diasporic” people (who move from base to base several times in a lifetime or career);

- It is a White American church which calls a Black Caribbean pastor;

- This White American church seeks to reach America’s fastest growing Hispanic community in Omaha, NE;

(b) (As mentioned already) The churches in the country that is host to immigrants have a responsibility to facilitate integration:

- i. Defend Scripture (and preaching) as the architect for this venture;
- ii. Discuss the reasons African-American churches in America began (refer to Witham), rendering them non-integrated;
- iii. Discuss the phenomenon of “White Flight” in churches, formerly White, now diverse or non-White or otherwise integrated without a White presence;
- iv. Looking at (ii) and (iii), make a judgment about whether the reasons for these non-integrated church situations are fair or poor reasons:
 - Even if they are fair reasons, are they still relevant?
 - Even if they are fair reasons, isn’t there a greater imperative nowadays?
- v. Make a case for intentional orientation to diasporic issues (cite Pocock and Henriques);
- vi. Outline the 4 different types of congregations in diaspora (cite Detwiler);
- vii. Discuss the “sustainers, breakers and blenders” (according to Pocock, p.53);

- viii. Diasporic churches should make an impact materially, spiritually, socially and pastorally on immigrants;
 - ix. Those (diasporic) churches need to ensure a strong preaching ministry that consciously bears diasporic people in mind;
 - x. The churches should facilitate components of worship that remind diasporic people of home;
- (c) DCC understand and desire integration (questionnaires);
 - (d) Outline the “ecology” of diaspora (cite Detwiler);
 - (e) The diasporic Church has a mandate to gather together people who are on the same journey to a new home (Smith, p.33);
 - (f) Not all diasporic Christians are interested in diasporic ministry; this itself is a powerful reason for integration (cite Detwiler, 107).

7. Christians in exilic conditions: A Reflection

- (a) A personal look: how Thlipsis Baptist Church (not its real name) failed as a diasporic church:
 - i. Discuss “diasporic church” at two levels – first the level of an American church serving diasporic people; second the level of an ethnic church (which Thlipsis became);

- ii. It was a White congregation at inception, and experienced “white flight” starting in the 1970’s (a brief historical sketch);
- iii. It became a predominantly Black (African-American and Caribbean-American) church;
- iv. It failed to embrace a Caribbean pastor;
- v. It failed in its hospitality to new immigrants;
- vi. It failed to reach out to the communities and diverse ethnicities in its community;
- vii. It failed to embrace values from home (the Caribbean) and fell prey to assimilation instead of integration (manifested in their readiness to impersonally hire and fire pastor after pastor, a phenomenon that is rare in the Caribbean from whence those persons came, but which is prevalent in the US).

CHAPTER SIX

“Mission in Diaspora”

1. Discuss Perspectives on Mission from the Caribbean Reality:

- (a) Argue that colonial missionaries underdeveloped the Caribbean Church (cite Watty);
- (b) Argue that colonial missionaries (generally) underdeveloped the Caribbean person by not enabling them to achieve their fullest theological, ecclesiastical and other potential);
- (c) Argue that colonial missionaries underdeveloped Caribbean preaching;
- (d) European and American Mission in the Caribbean suffered because of the traditional role of church to side with the establishment (cite Smith);
- (e) European and American Mission in the Caribbean suffered from their theology of domination (cite Lewin Williams);
- (f) Notwithstanding all the foregoing, the Caribbean Church is equipped to show the world a new thing (cite Watty, p.28);
- (g) Caribbean Christians who are immigrants to the US may be aliens, but they are also missionaries.

2. Diasporic Churches and/or Diasporic Caribbean Christians in America may learn from the Caribbean's experience with the (former) Foreign Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention (FMB/SBC):

- (a) Trace a brief account of the involvement of the FMB/SBC in the Caribbean;
- (b) Trace a brief account of the involvement of the Baptist Missionary Society in the Caribbean; compare the two – (a) and (b);
- (c) Relate how the SBC came to partner with the Caribbean Baptist Fellowship (CBF);
- (d) Discuss some of the positive observations about SBC mission activity (none related to theological development or real church development):
 - i. Financial assistance;
 - ii. Contact and fellowship provision;
 - iii. (Some) Theological development;
 - iv. Church buildings;
 - v. Special projects and programmes;
- (e) Discuss some of the negative observations about SBC mission activity:
 - i. Expose the problem of supremacy;
 - ii. Expose the problem of identity;

iii. Expose the problem of dependency;

(f) More observations can be made:

- i. Argue that the Barbados Baptist College (started by the FMB/SBC, now defunct) contributed to under-developing Caribbean Baptist theological development because of its failure to provide a high standard of education ;
- ii. Argue that the FMB/SBC underdeveloped Caribbean Baptist leadership;
- iii. Argue that the FMB/SBC broke community (by its insistence on its own mission, separate and apart from the local community (unlike the British missionaries);
- iv. Argue that the SBC divided Trinidad Baptists.

3. What lessons can be derived from the Caribbean operations of the FMB/SBC for DCC in mission in America?

(a) While remaining faithful to home, don't engender dependency:

- i. Watch those monetary gifts;
- ii. Watch those one-sided mission "exchanges";
- iii. Watch those inadequate tokens in the name of "mission";

(b) While remaining faithful to home don't contribute to a confused identity:

- i. What do Caribbean immigrants communicate to the homeland about the USA?
 - ii. How faithful have Caribbean immigrants remained to those they have left at home?
- (c) While remaining faithful to home don't create false supremacy:
- i. Watch those consumer tastes and "flashiness" (I Peter 3:1-7);
 - ii. Watch those criticisms of home;
 - iii. Watch those incidents of discounting the value of home;
- (d) In the new homeland, aim at integration with other churches and other ethnicities;
- (e) In the new homeland, sharpen your theological knowledge and lift the standard of theological engagement/discussion;
- (f) In the new homeland, share your comprehensive, systematic, faith (instead of a defective, shallow faith);
- (g) In the new homeland, do the *whole* mission that Christ left for you to do (consult I Peter).

CHAPTER SEVEN

“The Diasporic Preacher”

1. Who will best preach to Diasporic Caribbean Christians? – It shall be a Diasporic Preacher.
 - (a) Discuss who is a Diasporic Preacher. (It is not necessarily an immigrant, but one who preaches to diaspora, regardless of origin.)

2. Expose Peter as a Model to/for Diasporic Preachers

3. Discuss the Homiletical Issues in I Peter:
 - (a) Explore the hortatory passages;
 - (b) Describe and discuss the homiletical methods Peter uses;
 - (c) Examine the homiletic structure of the letter;
 - (d) Discuss “Reconfigurability”, “reinterpretability”, and “reorganizability” – the way in which I Peter may be applied homiletically to current trends among Diasporic Caribbean Christians.

4. Discuss Issues on Preacher “**Posture**”: DCC need a particular kind of minister **in** the pulpit. This person must:

- (a) Be careful to allow the “government” of the Word over a sermon;
- (b) Interpret the word from the crucible of the church (explore David Wells’ *No Place For Truth*) assertion that theology is faulty and unreliable if it is done from the “academe” instead of in the church [shouldn’t diasporic preaching therefore, come from a theology of a diasporic church?]);
- (c) Be theocentric, not culturecentric;
- (d) Understand that it is identity – not culture – that must be preserved, and therefore preach accordingly;
- (e) Be theologically astute, but preach to maintain Christian identity more than theology;
- (f) Beware of culture – and never pander to “popular” culture, no matter how “baptized” it may be, for all cultures will eventually die;
- (g) Understand that being in the world but not of it requires knowledge of, even participation in, the world, though not assimilation into the world;
- (h) Preach Creator, not culture;

- (i) Preach for conversion from the world's cultures and values to the values of the Christian community and the Lord of that community;
- (j) Preach for *maintaining* that conversion!
- (k) Be an agent of change in the new community because of his or her own change and transfer into the community of faith;
- (l) Value his or her own diasporic experiences – literal or spiritual – since those are part of the continuing biblical story;
- (m) Exhaust other observations in Questionnaires (PQ2, 3, 4, 8, 14; MQ1, 2, 3, 5, 7).

5. Issues on Preacher **Performance**: DCC need a particular kind of ministry **from** the pulpit. They need preaching configured for diasporic conditions. They need...

- (a) Preaching that enables catharsis and grieving their loss (of what's left behind);
- (b) Preaching that dispels despair and engenders hope;
- (c) Preaching that discourages assimilation into any system other than the Kingdom of God;
- (d) Preaching that raises assimilation and despair as twin enemies of diaspora;

- (e) Preaching that heightens awareness of the “inheritance” of dispossessed (I Peter 1:3-5);
- (f) Preaching that clarifies and prepares its listeners for cultural dissonance and “moral incongruity” (Brueggemann);
- (g) Preaching that establishes and engenders community;
- (h) Preaching that stimulates the imagination so that the listeners constantly imagine, on the basis of Scripture, alternatives to their negative realities;
- (i) Preaching that revisits the past and reinterprets (not reinvents) it for the future;
- (j) Preaching that moves beyond the present to look ahead, beyond and above;
- (k) Preaching that stimulates faith into action;
- (l) Preaching that constantly reminds of the separation between Church and State;
- (m) Preaching that celebrates the ‘alien’ identity;
- (n) Preaching that discourages relaxing in or retreat from the world;
- (o) Exhaust other observations in Questionnaire (MQ4, 8, 14b).

6. Discuss Issues on Preacher **Product**: What DCC, in their own words, say they need in their sermons:

- (a) They need comfort for their sufferings;

- (b) They need challenge against the ease with which they could slip into 'paganism';
- (c) They need hope (I Peter 1:3-5);
- (d) They need assurance (I Peter 5:10);
- (e) They need reassurance;
- (f) They need inspiration;
- (g) They need blessing;
- (h) They need guidance;
- (i) They need spiritual food;
- (j) They need growth;
- (k) They need a relevant word for the moment (contextualization in diaspora);
- (l) They need something for the coming week (relevance);
- (m) They need enlightenment in God's truth (Peter's [systematic] theology);
- (n) They need confirmation from God;
- (o) Exhaust other observations in Questionnaires (PQ10; MQ7, 8).

CHAPTER EIGHT

“The Sermon as a Product of Christian Community”

1. Scriptural interpretation is best conducted in community:
 - (a) It is not for private or personal interpretation (II Peter 1:20);
 - (b) Community is the ethos of the Church, and God addresses community above individual – Hans Kung (*The Church*).
2. Sermon feedback groups enrich community and enrich sermons:
 - (a) The definition of a sermon feedback group;
 - (b) The functions of a sermon feedback group.
3. Examine the usefulness of a sermon feedback group:
 - (a) Explore the method, value and functions of pre-sermon feedback;
 - (b) Explore the method, value and functions of post-sermon feedback;
 - (c) Demonstrate how sermon feedback groups strengthen faith in diaspora;
 - (d) Demonstrate how sermon feedback groups strengthen diasporic community;

- (e) Demonstrate how sermon feedback groups strengthen diasporic theology (because it gives scope for corporate [community] theological reflection).
4. Reveal the conduct, content and result of a Pre-Sermon Feedback Group in a DCC congregation, where the sermon was on “suffering”:
- (a) Suffering is a topic that is heard of infrequently in their pulpit;
 - (b) When it is heard, it is often a “side issue”;
 - (c) People don’t want to hear only that suffering is a consequence of sin;
 - (d) They want to hear more how suffering is a refining procedure;
 - (e) They want to see the *outcome* of a life of suffering!
 - (f) They want to hear about suffering without a judgmental tone;
 - (g) They want “careful, broad research” done on suffering before any talk or preaching about it;
 - (h) They do not want anyone’s suffering to be trivialized from the pulpit;
 - (i) They do not want to hear that you shouldn’t grieve when you suffer;
 - (j) They observe that too few preachers ground suffering in a biblical context;

- (k) They want the preacher to avoid the idea that Christians should expect *only* suffering and deprivation (this appears to be the *other* side the 'prosperity gospel'-coin);
 - (l) They want a picture of suffering, yet triumphing Christ;
 - (m) They consider it a picture for believers and unbelievers alike.
5. Research among Diasporic Caribbean Congregations has revealed that DCC want:
- (a) To think through their faith;
 - (b) A Biblical anchor for all pulpit declarations;
 - (c) Respect;
 - (d) Relevance;
 - (e) A Preacher who knows them;
 - (f) Conservative Sermon Styles;
 - (g) Good story telling skills more than the use of (some) visual aids;
 - (h) To share dialogue in the preaching experience.
6. Research among Diasporic Caribbean Congregations has also revealed that Preachers to DCC should avoid:
- (a) Assuming they are the only theological thinkers in the church;
 - (b) Thinking they are the only ones who best know "sheep ways" (sheep know "fellow sheep" extremely well!);

- (c) Sermons that cloud a vision of Christ as our life example;
 - (d) Sermons that divorce the “word” from the “Word”;
 - (e) Poor preparations, trite declarations, lame generalizations;
 - (f) Quarantining exegesis from audience experience, motives, motivators and feelings;
 - (g) Venturing too far away from the congregation’s comfort level when attempting sermon innovations (tell of my own experience which prompted this observation);
 - (h) Any props or “aids” that will hinder or distract, rather than improve or enhance, proclamation and clarity (engage in discourse on some dangers of multi-media);
 - (i) Seeking or entertaining only post-sermon (and rejecting pre-sermon) feedback. (The former may help with assessment, but the latter, just as valuable, may help with preparation and the preacher’s perception of the audience.)
7. Diasporic Preachers should assess their congregations annually, looking for changes:
- (a) The change that happens in regular congregations also happens in diasporic congregations
 - i. Changes arise from family, educational, relocation, economic, medical, employment, social and other situations;

- (b) Change happens regularly in diasporic communities:
 - ii. Immigration laws or developments affect members of diasporic communities;
 - iii. Issues in the homeland impinge on life in diaspora (family crises, political and social developments);
 - (c) The composition of the church membership may change (ethnic, educational, professional etc);
 - (d) The members may change (marriage, ideas, life reversals, upward mobility);
 - (e) The community may change (demographics);
 - (f) The everyday issues and concerns may change;
 - (g) The leadership dynamics may change;
 - (h) The spiritual climate and dynamics may change;
 - (i) The needs (social, community, spiritual, logistic and other) may change;
 - (j) The church's programs may change;
 - (k) The church's moods (joys and sorrows and more) may change.
8. The diasporic preacher should then aim at understanding how all this [7
- (a) – (k) above] makes impact on the congregation:
 - (a) It all makes an impact on the congregation's listening;
 - (b) It all makes an impact on the congregation's needs;

- (c) It all makes an impact on how this leads to a biblical sermon text to address the congregation from the heart and mind of God.

9. The Diasporic Preacher may consider joining or forming a preacher peer-mentoring group:

- (a) This group is a “preaching community” within the diasporic community;

- (b) There are significant benefits of this community effort:

- i. It sharpens theological reflection;
- ii. It enables the act of “doing” theology to take its most relevant position – among preachers;
- iii. It sharpen hermeneutical skills;
- iv. It sharpens homiletical thought and streamlining;
- v. It sharpens biblical astuteness;
- vi. It sharpens the preacher’s “preparational responsibility”;
- vii. It exposes personal weakness (not for ridicule but for betterment);
- viii. It challenges the preacher to higher standards;
- ix. It provides an opportunity for much-needed accountability;
- x. It improves listening sensitivities in the preacher;
- xi. It becomes a reference point for charting progress and scheduling excellence as a preacher;

- xii. It builds helpful, caring, and honest friendships;
- xiii. It builds a vulnerability based on trust and love, which, in turn, fosters humility.

10. The Diasporic Preacher may consider joining or forming a Community-Mentoring Group (CMG):

- (a) Show the difference between the preacher peer-mentoring group and the CMG;
- (b) The CMG can increase your respect for the congregation (given the level of theological reflection of which they are capable and the usefulness to which they may put themselves);
- (c) The CMG may improve the prayer life of the community (and the community itself);
- (d) The CMG can makes the sermon a celebration of community;
- (e) The CMG offers a greater opportunity for sermon relevance and “target-ability”;
- (f) The CMG ferrets out and identifies varied gifts from within the congregation;
- (g) The CMG exposes preacher ‘blind spots’;
- (h) The CMG provides alerts of major adjustments needed:
 - xiv. Stylistic adjustments may be needed;

- xv. An adjustment to the preacher's perception of the congregation's need may be necessary;
 - xvi. Content adjustments may be needed;
 - xvii. Perspective adjustments may be needed;
- (i) The CMG affords both the preacher (and the congregation) insights he may not have but may need!
 - (j) The CMG enables the preacher to edge nearer to parishioners' lives and minds';
 - (k) The CMG provides significant confirmation (and energy) for the preacher.

11. Fundamental, Critical and Technical Issues for the Diasporic Preacher :

- (a) Always deal with a single unit of thought! (Strongly recommend both *Biblical Preaching* (by Haddon Robinson) and *The Big Idea of Biblical Preaching* (by Willhite and Gibson);
- (b) Show the statistics to demonstrate the retention rate when a single unit of thought is used;
- (c) "Points", "sub-points" and "movements" don't matter as much as the single idea of the sermon (show statistic that proves this);
- (d) Demonstrate how to formulate an idea (Refer to Robinson and Sunukjian; Demonstrate with my own "proven template" carved from a composite of Robinson and Sunukjian):

- i. Choose a portion of Scripture which itself is one complete unit of thought – a complete story or a complete message;
- ii. Study the passage carefully with all the theological and hermeneutical tools available;
- iii. Outline the passage historically – follow the author’s original trend of thought. Use complete sentences;
- iv. Outline the passage universally – translate the passage from the narrow original context to what it may say to an audience anywhere at any time. Rearrange, if necessary, for logical flow (which may not be congruent with the author’s literary flow), using complete sentences;
- v. Outline the passage homiletically – state what it is saying to the congregation you will be addressing. Use complete sentences!
- vi. Ask yourself the question: “What is this passage talking about?” It has been proven that answering that question with a question increases the accuracy of interpretation. Using one of the words – who, what, why, when, where, how – to begin the answer, look carefully at the text and answer. You have just formulated what Robinson calls the *subject* of the idea;

- vii. Next, ask yourself, “What is this passage *saying* about what it is talking about?” It is important that this question answers the question that you have stated for your subject. When you do that, you will have formed your *complement* of the idea. The subject and the complement together form the single idea of the sermon. This idea must be stated in one single sentence. This idea is what you are going to support in your sermon outline.
- viii. Explore Robinson’s thesis about the only four things that can be done with an idea: we can **restate** it, or **explain** it, or **prove** it, or **apply** it.
- ix. Expand on the process of clarifying the idea with the “three developmental questions”, showing how this amplifies the idea;
- x. Complete the introduction to my “proven template” (based on Robinson and Sunukjian).

CHAPTER NINE

“Preaching to All Diasporic Christians” (Generalizations)

1. Identity always matters. Every preacher in any situation in any diaspora or in no diaspora at all would do well to:
 - (a) know their audience;
 - (b) know the ethnic issues that create identity;
 - (c) know the individual and family concerns;
 - (d) know the matters that develop the people’s faith in the peculiar ways it has developed.

2. Observe that there are nuances and differences between faith developed in African states, compared to Latin American states or Asian states (so as to demonstrate the impact faith development has on identity and vice-versa, and to explain why Caribbean Christianity is unique).

3. Peter’s letter can be universally applied to any Christian situation and any diasporic situation – not just Caribbean Diasporic Christians.

4. Show how First Peter was recently applied to New Life Baptist Church, a non-immigrant congregation with an immigrant pastor, with peripatetic

professionals, and which is targeting a Hispanic community. Highlight the dynamics that show generalizations not peculiar to Caribbean immigrants only.

5. As with the biblical record of First Peter, the tenets of Diasporic Theology may also be applied universally, beyond a Caribbean immigrant context, especially if the point of departure of this theology is biblical.
6. All immigrants encounter discomfort, challenge, crisis and suffering of the same kind identified among Caribbean immigrants, though not necessarily with the same manifestations.
7. All ethnic groupings in diaspora demonstrate the need for – if not organizational skills to organize – lasting community that serves the maintenance of their heritage and links with the homeland. Many now demonstrate sensitivity to the need for identifying with the new homeland as well, more by way of integration, rather than assimilation.
8. All Diasporic Christians, as well as all Christian Churches in America, need to examine the great value in welcoming one another into a common community as a powerful Christian witness to unity and “comm-unity.” There is need for boosting the idea of diversity not merely from a

sociological or even missional point of view, but from a theological viewpoint. This issue of diversity should not be viewed as a matter of choice but of urgent responsibility.

9. There is strong merit in arguing a case for all Diasporic Christians in America – not just Caribbean ones – to consider themselves missionaries – not just immigrants – with a biblical mandate (First Peter) to live their faith in a peculiar way so as to win their neighbors.
10. The observations made of Preaching among Diasporic Caribbean Christians may be readily applied to not only other Diasporic Christians, but also to congregations in any situation. The merits of building a “homiletic community” are obvious and fully to be desired.

SECTION II

Sermons

In the final product (the book) this section to the sermons will be prefaced with the explanation that the reader will find the sermons in both outline form and full form. The purpose of the outlines is twofold: (1) it will enable preachers, who wish to use the sermons, to break down each sermon presented here into more than one sermon, depending on the time they may have to preach, or for any other logistical reason; (2) it will enable the homiletics student to see the sermons' structure (which is often less discernible or less *readily* discernible in the full form). Regarding the first of the two "folds", it must be admitted that the sermons may appear somewhat lengthy. This arises from two things. The first is the result of a tough decision the writer had to make. The sermons in this book could have either been more numerous (as much as twice or three times as many as appear here) or more lengthy (as they might appear here) in order to do a justifiable exegesis and exposition of First Peter. The writer opted for sermons with larger textual units, which tended to yield longer sermons. The second is also quite valid: it is the preacher's Caribbean orientation, where worship services are generally more than two hours, with at least a third of that time

devoted to the sermon. The Caribbean preacher in America does have major adjustments to make!

Secondly, though the sermons are intended for a Diasporic (Caribbean) Christian audience, the sermons may have a more general tone to them. The sermon series will, in fact, be preached first at a non-Caribbean and non-diasporic church. It will take the slant of “spiritual diaspora” – a sub-theme in the thesis-project. By the time the book is published, this sermon series will have already happened and will be reported as a past event. It is believed that the form the sermons will take in the book will be adaptable to any Christian setting or congregation, and to any diasporic setting or congregation.

CHAPTER TEN

Sermon One

“Second-Class Appearance; First-Class Reality”

I Peter 1:1-9

Introduction:

1. Do you remember that car that looked so great – you just *had* to get it – but it turned out to be a lemon?
2. What about Ben Johnson, who won the 100M race in the 1988 Olympics but was banned for life because he was really on steroids? Or what of Mark McGwire, whose entire “stellar” baseball career went up in smoke for the same reason? And now, Floyd Landis, the “winner” of the 2006 *Tour de France*?
3. Lots of things, people and situations that appear to be first-class turn out not to be so; But it’s also true that some second-class-looking things, people and situations turn out to be the “real Mc koy.”
4. This may very well be true about you. Many of you are immigrants, treated like second-rate citizens because of your colour, or your accent or what people think they know about your education. I remember when in high school, I was looked upon as second-rate because I was a Christian and never hid it. I was not welcome among the popular boys. One day as

I tried to hang out with a small group of them, they insulted me and sent me packing. I felt like an outcast. I *was* an outcast!

5. The people we meet in our text today were also treated like second-raters. But as we shall see, they were truly first-class people. And it was their relationship with Jesus Christ that made them so. **(Read I Peter 1:1-9)**

I. You may be discounted strangers in a foreign land (vs. 1)

1. Peter's "strangers" are exposed to trials and suffering (vs.1, 6; 4:3-4; 12-15) because they didn't "belong" there (they were "scattered", not settled)!
2. You believers who are immigrants to this country and you may be treated like second-class citizens.
3. Because of her foreign accent Sandra is denied the promotion given to a community college graduate, despite her superior work ethic and her Master's degree from some "strange", unknown, University of the West Indies. Sandra is a discounted stranger in a foreign land. Sandra may be seated here today.

Transition: But is this all there is to your reality as an immigrant?

II. Though second-class in the world, you are special to God (vs. 3-6a)

1. You belong to God through the work of the Godhead (vs.2).
2. You have been born into a living hope through Jesus' resurrection (vs. 3).
3. You have been born into a divine inheritance (vs.4):

(a) This inheritance is “kept...for you”: non-perishable and non-transferable;

(b) You *also* are kept (“preserved”) for this inheritance! (vs. 5).

4. Because of all of this you can rejoice greatly (vs.6)!

Transition: But this joy is accompanied by the grief of trials:

III. The trials you face prove your faith as genuine and valuable (vs. 6b-7)

1. Genuine gold is proven by the fire that burns away all impurities.
2. Genuine faith is proven by the suffering through which the believer goes.
3. Faith is much more valuable and durable than gold (and probably requires more heat!).
4. Suffering is worth it if it proves something valuable:
 - (a) Lance Armstrong suffering to “prove” himself at Tour de France;
 - (b) We come through suffering to prove how much we trust God.

Transition: The true value of this faith is in what it helps us to do:

IV. This faith helps you experience Jesus and receive your salvation. (vs. 8-9)

1. We experience Christ (we love and believe him) even though we do not see him – this is faith! (vs.8).
2. We believe Christ and we receive with joy the goal of faith: our salvation (vs.9).
3. But remember we have to endure suffering to get to all this!

Big Idea: Diasporic (Caribbean) Christians in the USA are first-class people even though they may suffer disadvantage like second-class people.

Conclusion

1. They must have laughed at Thomas Edison a few hundred times – once for each time Edison “failed” – when he was trying to invent the electric light bulb! They must have not only thought him a second-rated scientist; they must have also thought him a madman! Without having a clue about the mettle of this man, they must have called him a hundred different derogatory names! But is anybody – sitting down in with their fluorescent reading lamp under their recessed incandescent lighting laughing now?
2. You may be told day in, day out that you are a “nobody”, because of your skin colour, or your ethnic origin, or your accent or your education. You may be called a “nobody” because of what people *assume* about you. Or you may be called a “nobody” because of your faith and allegiance to Jesus. You must answer back with your high hope, staked on a great inheritance, provided by a true faith in a real God. Answer back and say, more to yourself than to them, “God has called me to be his own; he has called me to be his best. I may look second-class to you, but I am first-class in Jesus Christ!”

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Sermon Two

“Holiness: Apply Directly To Your Lifestyle!”

I Peter 1:13-22

Introduction:

1. There’s a nauseating little advertisement that has been appearing on TV for the past many months. It is only 11 syllables long, and it is repeated twice. It doesn’t say much, but it is the most annoying ad I have encountered in a long time. I turn the volume off when I see that ad coming up. I was not surprised to read a report that declared that that ad was perhaps the most effective one in years to hit the airwaves. In fact, I had tried not to admit it to myself in the weeks before I read the report. The ad is remarkably clear in its annoying repetition of a few words. By now you know the ad I am speaking about:

Head-on: apply directly to the forehead!

Head-on: apply directly to the forehead!

Head-on: apply directly to the forehead!

The article says that the ad doesn’t state what “Head-On” is for; however, I doubt that nobody knows what it is for. It is for the headache that the ad itself brings on, if you didn’t have one before!

2. Today I want to change the words of that ad by applying a version of it to the passage of Scripture we shall meditate on. Today I say to you:

Holiness: apply directly to your lifestyle! (*Repeat Twice.*)

3. In our text today we shall hear a call to holiness and we shall hear why we are called to be holy, especially as Christians in diaspora. **Read I Peter 1:13-22**

I. You should not live sinful lives (vs. 14)

1. Peter warns his readers against the returning to their former sinful lifestyle:
 - (a) You are in an environment that tempts you to do so;
 - (b) It is a hostile environment that may prompt retaliation (1:1, 6, 14, 17, 2:1, 20);
 - (c) It is a sinful environment that may prompt seduction (2:11; 4:3-4).

Transition: There is a far better alternative to living sinful lives:

II. Instead, you should live in holiness (vs. 13, 15-19)

1. Holiness is a matter of **focus**.
2. Holiness is a matter of **fear**: fear is reverence; it is the unwillingness to corrupt or pollute yourself by blending into the world; it is the determination to remain a “stranger” to the world.

3. Holiness is a matter of **faithfulness**: as Christ is holy, so we should be (vs.15-16); as Christ was stranger in the world, so are we, as believers and as immigrants (vs.17).
4. Holiness is a matter of **foundation**: it is upon the blood of one who was himself holy – without blemish, defect, and spotless (vs.19) that our faith is founded – nothing less!

III. You should live like this because it fulfills the work of Christ (vs. 20-22)

1. Christ was chosen, revealed and sent for our sake (vs. 20):
 - (a) He was sent that we might believe God and hope in him (vs. 21);
 - (b) He was sent that we might become holy through obeying the truth (vs.22a);
 - (c) He was sent that we might love others sincerely and build community (vs. 22).

Conclusion:

1. There's a nasty little disease that affects all of us. This disease has been around so long that we might think that there is no cure for it. Why? We ask – why aren't we able to eradicate this disease? Well, the disease is lostness. And there is a cure for it, named salvation in Jesus Christ. But it is common that those, cured of this disease, lostness, very often

experience symptoms that appear to be relapses. In that case, there is only one remedy:

Holiness: apply directly to your lifestyle!

Holiness: apply directly to your lifestyle!

Holiness: apply directly to your lifestyle!

Apply holiness to your lifestyle today. You will relieve the whole world of a big headache.

CHAPTER TWELVE

Sermon Three

“When In Rome, Do As The bin Ladens Do!”

I Peter 2:1-11

Introduction:

1. Osama bin Laden and his family of terrorists crawl into Rome. Can you imagine them going to St. Peter’s on Christmas morning and standing solemnly and respectfully as Pope Benedict delivers the sermon and the faithful sing “O Come All Ye Faithful”? And can you imagine them going to sit and watch Italy play a World Cup Soccer rematch with France? Not a chance! I guarantee you that if bin Laden and his cronies were to visit Rome, it would be to bomb the Basilica, to shoot the Pope and hijack a handful of Alitalia aircraft. I’m certain that when in Rome, the bin Ladens would **not** do as the Romans do! No matter how warped their ideology or their faith, they would remain faithful to that standard!
2. I would hardly raise Osama bin Laden as a beacon of example for anything good. I know that the saying, “When in Rome, do as the Romans do” is an encouragement to politely observe the customs and sensitivities of the people, when you are on their turf. But I *would* challenge you that as Caribbean Christians who have come to live in

America, that you have a responsibility to live, not like Americans do primarily, but as Christians do! The Christian lifestyle you are to live here in America is to be so radical to the secular lifestyles being promoted all around you that it is appropriate to say “When in Rome, do as the bin Ladens do”!! Not that I suggest you bomb, kill, hijack and destroy! But the idea is that you are to lead lifestyles diametrically different to those who live in the world and are of the world!

3. You are not the first Christian people to encounter this challenge. The people to whom Peter wrote had to deal with this. He challenges them to live differently. And he tells them why. **Read I Peter 2:1-11**

A. Textual Units

- I. **(vs. 1-3, 11)** Peter tells his readers that they need to live a life free from sin and live pure lives instead.
- II. **(vs. 4-8)** He tells them that they have a special relationship in Jesus Christ.
- III. **(vs. 9-10)** Then he tells them that they have undergone a remarkable change.

B. Contemporary Relevance

- I. **You (Diasporic Caribbean Christians) should live by a new standard (vs.1-3, 11)**
 1. It is a standard that rejects the popular, secular standards (vs. 1, 11).
 2. It is a standard of new *birth*, new *taste* and new *growth* (vs.2-3).

3. Tell of my ride in a NY taxicab with (an immigrant) driver who wanted to go to seminary, but who got into a “cussing” match with another motorist!

Transition: Are we really able live like this? What incentive or energy is there for this?

II. You *can* live this way because you are being made to be like Jesus (vs. 4-8)

1. Everything Jesus was, you are: *rejected* by men (vs. 4; 1:1); *chosen* by God (vs. 9, 4); *precious* to God (vs. 9, 4); *living stones* (vs.5, 7) and a *priesthood* (just like Jesus is High Priest [vs. 5; Heb 4:14-15]).
2. If you are being made like Jesus, and if he lived this standard, you can do it too.

Transition: OK. So we can live like this; but why bother? Who cares?

III. You *should* live this way because your identity demands it (vs. 9-10)

1. Who are you? You are not what you used to be!
 - (a) You once lacked *community* – you were not a people;
 - (b) You once lacked *immunity* – you had no mercy (vs. 10).
2. Who are you? You are now something you never were!
 - (a) You are a *people* – divinely chosen and divinely claimed (vs. 9);
 - (b) You are a *priesthood* – holy and royal (vs. 9);
 - (c) You are a *population* – divinely gathered and holy (vs. 9).
3. How then, can you live in sin if your identity is in salvation?

4. **(B.I.) Christians should live by a different standard in a secular society because their new identity in Jesus Christ demands that they do so.**
5. I have been impressed with Jim Bakker, that PTL “mogul”, who “fell from grace” back in the 80s and did time in prison for fraud. There are others who have “fallen from grace” who say they are changed and yet we continue to hear of their indiscretions or see them promoting self at every opportunity. Not Jim Bakker. He went to prison, did his time, and for the few times we have seen him since, he is chastened, humbled, contrite, and truly refreshingly changed! I believe that when I see Jim Bakker, I see Jesus – not some fellow consumed with himself! Here is a man who once could only *talk* about living by a different standard, but who clearly lived by the world’s standards. Now he *clearly* lives by a different and higher standard!
6. **(Repeat B.I.) Christians should live by a different standard in a secular society because their new identity in Jesus Christ demands that they do so.**

Conclusion

1. Neil Armstrong, Buzz Aldrin, and Michael Collins made going to the moon look like a piece of cake. Not only was it a huge risk, but those men knew of a very real possibility – in fact, a more than 50% chance – that they would never be able to leave to moon (technology issues: mainframe

computers not having more capacity than today's laptop; onboard computer's capacity between a cellphone and a watch – nearer the watch).

In fact, President Nixon prepared a speech including the lines: “they went to the moon in a mission of peace; now they shall rest there in peace.” For Aldrin, Collins and Amstrong, though, staying on the moon was not an option. They didn't go to the moon to stay. They may have been the first on the moon, but they were not ready to be last on the moon. They didn't belong there, and they weren't ready to act as though they belonged there. And so, they did all in their power to ensure that they left that lunar ball, repairing a broken circuit breaker that was crucial to starting their engine.

2. You and I have to decide who we are – that we don't belong here, in the world, but are here only for moments. And while here, we must be sure not to act as the world does, but to remain true to who we really are – people who belong to Jesus, who are required to live by a standard higher than where we are. That higher standard by which we must live is the standard of where we really belong – not where we are now. Stay with that standard of living if you have already adopted it. If you haven't started to live that way as yet, it's time to start today.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Sermon Four

“Witness Projection Program”

I Peter 2:11-20

(This sermon is Part One to Sermon Five that follows. The two were originally one single sermon but which was split so as to fit a required time span in the church where they were actually preached.)

Introduction:

1. *(Preached a day before the 5th anniversary of “9/11”)* Suppose you discovered that someone you know, knew all the plans that the world’s greatest coward made before he had them executed on “9/11”, but didn’t tell a soul. Do you imagine that would that change your relationship with that person pretty fast? Even if you were against the death penalty, you would probably call for it this one time for that “traitor” for not “spilling the beans” on that hateful coward and his cronies. Suppose you knew someone who, instead of hating your friends, relatives and colleagues, loved them and wanted to preserve them forever? Would you hold the information back, or would you bear witness about what you know? Ah, but as a Christian you *do* know Someone like that! But we cannot keep

that fact hidden: we are meant to bear witness about that Someone. In our text today Peter begins to raise an issue that he carries straight through to 4:19: that as Christians, we have a missionary mandate in the world. And that mission begins with witness. **Read I Peter 2:11-20**

Transition: What does it mean to bear witness?

I. It means *visibility* in doing what is right (vs. 11-12)

1. Your life is an open book before unbelievers, like it or not!
2. Live good lives before them so that they, seeing this may glorify God.

Transition: What does it mean to bear witness?

II. It means *responsibility* to do what is right

1. You are responsible to the Lord to do what is right (vs. 12, 17).
2. You are responsible to the State to do what is right (vs. 13-14, 17).
3. You are responsible to the unbelievers to do what is right (vs. 15-16).
4. You are responsible to the Church to do what is right (vs. 13-17).

Transition: What does it mean to bear witness?

III. It means *vulnerability* in doing what is right (vs. 18-20)

1. In the world, you will suffer for doing what is right!
2. You already suffer because the world is generally hostile to minorities.

3. You already suffer because the world is generally hostile to servants (vs.18).
4. Now you will suffer because the world is hostile to what is right (see also, John 3:19).

Transition: What does it mean to bear witness?

IV. It means “commend-ability” in doing what is right (vs. 20)

1. When we do what is right, the world condemns us (vs.20); however...
2. ...When we do what is right, God commends us (vs.20).

Conclusion:

When I was a Police Chaplain, an officer introduced me to a man who was from another country and who was in a witness protection program at the time. Unfortunately, he broke the rules of the program and was murdered about one year later. The very essence of a witness protection program is safety and obscurity. Not so with Christian witnesses! We are to be visible! We are to be vulnerable! We are to show our good works! We are to show unbelievers the God who wants to save them! The very act of doing that may place us in the danger of the world, but it will place us in the safety of God. We don't need witness protection! What we need is witness *projection*: we need to project our good works (*not ourselves!*) to unbelievers; we need to project a witness to Jesus

Christ; we need to project a message that Jesus is Lord and that he loves them. I say, "Witness Projection" – not Witness Protection!

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

Sermon Five

“Conversion By Subversion”

I Peter 2:21-3:7

(This sermon is Part Two to Sermon Four that precedes it. The two were originally one single sermon but which was split so as to fit a required time span in the church where they were actually preached)

Introduction:

1. The earliest toys young boys prefer are toy guns, toy soldiers or power rangers. Our little girls like cooking sets and dollhouses to show how powerful they are, and how able to manage they are. Then these little boys and girls all grow up; they outgrow the toys but the desire for power still remains. The boys may go on to fast cars, or real guns. The girls may not all go on to be a Martha Stewart or an Oprah Winfrey, but they can hold their own. The truth is, however, that most of us do not become what we wanted to be; neither do we go on to be as powerful as we dreamed of becoming. Many of us have more sorrow and suffering than we imagined we could ever have.
2. But what if I told you that we Christians are far more powerful than we thought we were? What if I told you that the key to that power was in

your suffering? Well, that's the news today: the more you suffer – *not* for doing wrong, but as a righteous Christian – the more powerful you are! That's what our text will tell us today. And it will tell us what that power is for. **Read I Peter 2:21-24.**

I. You should be witnesses because you are called to do it (2:21-24)

1. This call raises an *obvious authority*: who calls? It is Christ!
 - (a) He gained and exercises this authority by suffering – a clue for us!
2. This call must raise an *obedient answer*: we should say “yes.”
 - (a) We should say yes because we are “aliens” just as Christ was (11-20 & 22-24).

II. You should do this so as to win unbelievers to God (READ vs. 25; 3:1-7)

1. They are winnable! (vs. 12, 15, 3:1-2)
2. We win them by submission, not by fighting back .
 - (a) Governments don't always do the right thing – but we should submit!
 - (b) Slave masters don't always do the right thing – but we should submit!
 - (c) Husbands don't always do the right thing – but we should submit!
 - (d) We may have rights – but we should submit (vs.7)!

(e) Submitting is not *optional*, or *exceptional* or *total* (Acts 5:29), but it is *general*! It is exactly how Jesus himself did it (vs. 22-25).

3. There is salvation power and authority in Christian suffering/submission (21-25)!

(a) Christ submitted/suffered to save us (**vs. 25**)!

(b) We should submit/suffer to save them (vs.13, 18, 3:1)!

(c) This is why we say it is subversive: we are literally going under (submitting, suffering) so as to come out on top (having persuaded unbelievers to believe God)!

B.I: Even though you suffer, (Diasporic) Christians should bear witness to God because God will use this to win unbelievers to himself.

4. What if we don't win them? What if...

(a) ...Stephen didn't win Paul? This was conversion by *subversion*!

(b) ...Wilkerson didn't win Nicky Cruz? This was conversion by *subversion*!

(c) ...MLK Jr. didn't win segregationists? This was conversion by *subversion*!

(d) ...OBL were captured alive, put in prison with 4 converts to Christ...etc?

B.I: Even though you suffer, (Diasporic) Christians should bear witness to God because God will use this to win unbelievers to himself.

Conclusion

As the minority in the world, I charge you to be subversive, because you are powerful and strong; be subversive, not by human or political or legal force, but by the power of love, submission to God and endurance of the worst you can face, knowing that God will use it to do mission – win others to himself through you, just as he won you to him through Jesus' submission and endurance. Submit and suffer! And God will use it to convert others and enable you to conquer! It's called "conversion by subversion"!

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

Sermon Six

“Charity Begins At Home, But She Travels Abroad!”

I Peter 3:8-18

Introduction:

1. One of the adages and sayings that we grew up with is the one “Charity begins at home.” It is a call to be faithful to the ones you love and to the places you belong. It goes further. It suggests that you are *derelect* in your duty if you are not taking care of home or faithful to where you belong. It goes even further: it suggests that you are deceitful if you are taking care of elsewhere and leaving home to fend for itself, or committing yourself to other places and programs and leaving home bereft of all support and encouragement. Charity begins at home.
2. We all know that charity begins at home. But has anybody ever told you just *where* charity is going to end up after she starts at home? This morning I want to affirm that charity begins at home, and the Bible tells me so. But I also want to tell you where charity goes when she leaves home. Charity begins at home, but she travels abroad! Read I Peter 3:8-11

I. You (DC) Christians should forge caring communities (vs. 8)

1. It means moving beyond your self to *others*!
2. Everything Peter names here – harmony, sympathy, brotherly love, compassion and humility – move beyond *self* to *others*.

(a) Story of a couple of burglars who attempt to rob a house, but come upon the action of the neighborhood watch. These two crooks just encountered community: the care the neighbors exercise for one another!

(b) Once, when I was a boy, I was about to get a good hiding from my father and the neighbor across the road called out to my dad to spare me. I got off free. I just experienced community there!

Transition: But when we forge these communities, does that mean that they become our exclusive domain? No way!

II. You should extend your care beyond your communities (vs. 9-14)

1. We are to care, regardless of how “outsiders” treat us (evil, insults) – (vs.9).
2. We are not to retaliate or victimize! (vs.9):
 - (a) Doing evil brings God’s trouble, but God doing good brings God’s blessings (vs.10-13);
 - (b) Even if people harmed us for doing good, we are blessed, because God does not harm us! (vs.14).
3. We have been *called* to do this: be faithful and be rewarded (blessing)!

- (a) Going the extra mile bears witness to Jesus;
- (b) Suppose the policy at P Baptist Church was that no funerals be held for non-members, or no infant blessings for children born out of wedlock. Suppose the pastor presented a case to show the congregations that there was a ministerial side to these issues beyond the “disciplinary” (*don’t complete story [results] here yet! Wait till next point!!*) The only way to reach others is to reach beyond ourselves!

(c) B.I. “Charity Begins At Home, But She Travels Abroad!”

Transition: But why bother? How do we justify doing this for people who go out of their way to disrespect, dismiss and damage us?

III. You should do this because it is witness and mission (vs. 15-18)

1. Doing good while suffering is an opportunity for witness:
 - (a) You should be prepared to tell *why* you would do this (vs.15);
 - (b) You should be careful of your attitude and motive (vs.15-16a);
 - (c) This is a potentially effective way to witness (shutting up and shaming those who slander in this hostile territory - vs.16b).
2. Doing good while suffering is Jesus’ example (vs.18):
 - (a) He suffered, but he was not a loser!
 - (b) He suffered, but he brought us to God!

3. Continue illustration from 4 (a) to show that many people in that situation might come to Jesus and become disciples because the church was led to go the extra mile. (Reveal here that this is not a hypothetical scenario!)
4. **B.I. "Charity Begins At Home, But She Travels Abroad!"**
5. Demonstrate how we may extend community and bear witness at the same time that we extend care:
 - (a) Tell story of Good Samaritan in modern ("not-at-first-recognizable") version;
 - (b) Tell of Jesus and woman at well (also in same modern version);
 - (c) Show how the end result is the gospel to the Gentiles...and you and me!

Conclusion

1. During this coming week you (Diasporic Caribbean Christians) are going to forge caring communities! It's for our own nurture. Charity begins at home.
2. But during this week you must extend that care beyond your Church if we are to continue the ministry of Christ! Those people need our care as well, even though they don't care about us. Charity begins at home, but she travels abroad!

3. When you reach out in charity beyond this church, this week, you will be doing the mission, outreach, evangelism, soul-winning and mind-winning that you ought to be doing in Jesus' name.
4. When you win them to the Lord and make disciples of them, charity will have completed her journey, having begun at home, having gone abroad, and having returned home. And then...she will be ready for another journey, ready to reach out in another direction...
 - ...somewhere beyond our church's walls!
 - ...somewhere beyond our comfort zone!
 - ...somewhere beyond our cultural clan!

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

Sermon Seven

“An Ounce Of Prevention Is Worse Than A Pound Of Trouble!”

I Peter 4:1-11

Introduction:

1. You have heard it said that an ounce of prevention is better than a pound of cure. But today I want to tell you that *An Ounce Of Prevention Is Worse Than A Pound Of Trouble!* It all depends on what you are trying to prevent! If you are trying to prevent an illness, then, of course, an ounce of prevention is better than a pound of cure. Or, if you are trying to prevent an accident or a calamity, an ounce of prevention is better than a pound of cure. But you know as well as I do that sometimes people prevent good things:

(a) OPEC wants to prevent people from getting cheap oil, so they do their thing – essentially a *bad* thing – to prevent a good thing!

(b) Somebody wanted to prevent John Kennedy from completing his Presidential Term, so they did a bad thing!

So how? How do they do it? How do people prevent good things from happening? It's simple – they do something wrong or do nothing when they should have done something. They *sin*.

2. Today I want to tell you that sin is a thing that will prevent good things in your life! Especially I will tell you in a little while of one particular thing that sin will prevent in the church and in the world. When we use sin as a preventative, then *"An Ounce Of Prevention Is Worse Than A Pound Of Trouble!"*

Read I Peter 4:1-11

I. You must reject sin (vs. 1-3)

1. Christ did it – you do it too (vs.1).
2. You've wasted enough time in sin (vs.3) – now do God's will (vs.2).
3. We have to learn how to reject sin:
 - (a) Mr. B. left a common-law relationship the night he started following Jesus (nobody told him to do it...except the Spirit). He rejected sin because he knew it was the right thing to do;
 - (b) Pastor T. says he has had opportunity to be unfaithful to his wife but has never done it, yes because of the Bible, but *more* because he doesn't want the pain of having to face his wife to tell her. He rejected sin because he didn't like the idea of the pain of sin.
 - (c) Mr. L. manages several hundred employees and a budget of millions – he could abuse them and the funds, but doesn't do it because he wants to be able to pray with a clear conscience and sleep well at night. He rejects sin because he wants to keep fellowship with God.

(d)Ms. M. joins a group to which she must report weekly about a certain temptation. She rejects sin because she wants to be accountable to her partners.

4. Look: whatever the motive, find a way to reject sin and stop sinning! It's worth it!

Transition: But you may ask, "Isn't it hard to reject sin?" I say yes, but...

II. You must reject sin *despite* the consequences (vs. 4)

1. You may have to suffer as you reject sin (vs. 1, 4)!
2. You may be abused for declining to sin (vs.4)!

Transition: But I will tell you more:

III. You must reject sin *because* of the consequences (vs. 5-6)

1. God will judge everyone – nobody escapes (vs.5)!
2. If you are disobedient God will judge you [negatively] (vs.5).
3. If you are obedient to him, God will judge you [positively] (explain vs.6).

Transition: You already have several reasons you should reject sin. But I want to tell you one more today:

III. You must reject sin because it prevents service (vs. 7-11)

1. In order to do service, we need to be *urgent, sober, sincere, hospitable* and *community-sensitive* (vs. 7-11).

2. Sin (the former life) prevents all of these from taking root or functioning!

(a) A girls scout leader steals the few thousand dollars that her troupe collected from cookie sales so as to pay her cell phone bills. Her bill is paid, but the little disabled children's project that the money was meant to support goes a-begging: **sin prevents service!**

(b) Governments spend hundreds of billions of dollars rushing to wars that many – including many in church – tell them are ill-advised, even though the rationale for war looked good to many others; yet, the same governments find it hard to locate money to alleviate or even eradicate poverty, or restoration after natural disasters or pay teachers a decent salary, or raise the minimum wage to something just and fair: **sin prevents service!**

Conclusion

1. *"An Ounce Of Prevention Is Worse Than A Pound Of Trouble!"* A little goes a long way! You would be wise to avoid using sin as prevention for anything. In fact, you would be wise to avoid sin altogether! In order to be truly of service to yourself, to your fellow human beings, to your community of faith and to your Lord, you need to reject sin, because it will prevent your involvement and engagement in service.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

Sermon Eight

“Suffering? Take Dedication, Not Medication!”

I Peter 4:12-19

Introduction:

1. When you woke up this morning, did you expect to find your spouse next to you? I take it that you did. Did you expect to find your car where you left it last night? I take it that you did. Did you expect to be here in worship this morning? I hope you did.
2. But, do you expect to cry some day next week? Or do one of you young people expect that that date you are trying to arrange will not only fall through, but that you won't succeed in arranging a date for the next year? Does any of you expect to bury a loved one in the next month?
3. These aren't exactly “Great Expectations”, and nobody likes to have these kinds. In fact, there is a piece of superstition that engulfs many Caribbean people: many of them never make a will because they think that once they did, their demise is not merely imminent, but to be expected soon!
4. But if I told you that there is a mandate in Scripture that demands of us to expect not just the unexpected, but the painful – the *very* painful – would you believe me? Would you be willing to order your life on the basis of this kind of expectation? Peter told the people to whom he wrote that

they are to expect to suffer. There is a reason he tells them this, of course, and we shall find out why.

Read I Peter 4:12-19

I. You (DC) Christians should expect suffering (vs.12)

1. Expect to suffer – don't be caught off guard!
2. Expect to suffer *because* you are an immigrant and a Christian.

II. You should suffer with dignity (vs.13-18)

1. You should rejoice *in* your sufferings (vs.13, 16):
2. You should suffer only for Christ – not for crimes (vs.14-15):

(a) Felix has been in New York for 14 years. He has a Master's degree from the University of the West Indies, and he is his church's webmaster. But this is the 6th time that Felix has been passed up for a promotion, and he just loses it when they tell him that this position requires someone with a "less obvious" Barbadian accent. Felix works late that day and sabotages the computer system, but he was caught by the security camera. Felix did the wrong thing *precisely because* he failed to suffer willingly.

3. You should set the example for doing good even while suffering (vs.17-18).

III. You should grow as you suffer (vs.19)

1. Keep on trusting God (“commit yourself to God”):

(a) When David was on the run from his own son Absalom, who stole the throne from him, David simply refused to gather an army against Absalom, or speak ill of Absalom, or try to re-establish himself as king, or rejoice when Absalom died. Instead, David committed himself to his Creator. David knew that if God made him, he also made him king; and if he could make him king once, he could do it again! Committing yourself to God is the idea of doing *nothing* when all there is to do is retaliation, damage, injury, and even self-defense!

2. Keep on doing good: **(B.I:) When we suffer for Jesus’ sake, we should remain faithful to God and keep on doing good!**

3. James Tillman was released from prison in Hartford, Connecticut, recently, having spent 18 years for a rape he didn’t commit. He was exonerated by DNA evidence that was unavailable then. Connecticut is one of the states that offer no compensation to wrongfully convicted persons. I am still outraged as I tell you this story, not only because Connecticut is the richest state in the Union, and Hartford is the poorest city on the east coast; I am also outraged because this young man had 18 of his most promising years snatched away by the same society and the same state that seemed pretty nonchalant about this man’s misfortune. But James

Tillman is a bigger man than perhaps I am: he was most gracious on his release. He is glad to be free, he is not bitter at anybody, he is not angry at the state and he is simply glad to have his faith in Jesus. Maybe this kind of grace and growth takes place only when we suffer.

4. **B.I: When we suffer for Jesus' sake, we should remain faithful to God and keep on doing good!**

Conclusion:

1. Some weeks ago you almost suffered when we referred to the advertisement that says, three times "Head On Apply Directly To The Forehead!" Well, the pain that we talked about today is the suffering we have to endure for Jesus' sake. For this kind of suffering, you don't take *medication* – you take *dedication*!

Expect to suffer as a Christian; expect to suffer as a foreigner.

Bear that suffering with dignity, for Jesus' sake and your benefit.

And grow as you suffer: keep trusting God, and keep doing good!

Take Dedication, Not Medication!

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

Sermon Nine

“Uneasy Lies The Head That Wears The Crown!”

I Peter 5:1-5

Introduction:

1. You know the saying, “Uneasy Lies The Head That Wears The Crown”, don’t you? It refers to the rigors and vagaries and dangers and jeopardy of leadership. Do you know of any leader – including dictators and despots in the world – who has had it easy? The lack of ease may emanate, simply, from honest, decisive leadership, when the honest leader fearlessly or even fearfully, confronts the devious, brutal and heartless power brokers who are a danger to themselves and others. The unease comes when the leader has to take responsibility – if not blame – for every indiscretion her subordinates commit. The unease also comes from *dishonest* leadership: it comes when the leader morphs into tyrant rather than servant, or when the leader *is* servant, all right, but serves himself first or alone! Yes, uneasy lies the head that wears the crown!
2. But I want to tell you today that the opposite of that statement is also true: “*Easy* Lies The Head That Wears The Crown.” It just depends on *when* the head wears that crown! And *that’s* the point about this message today. I am going to tell you that leadership is demanding. But we will

see in the end, that the crown of leadership is easy, *only if the leader wears the crown at the right time!* **Read I Peter 5:1-5.**

I. (Diasporic Caribbean) Pastors must give caring leadership (vs.1-3)

1. Peter addresses the *preparation* for pastoral leadership: suffering – he has seen Christ suffer and he has suffered, himself (vs.1)!
2. Everyone who does ministry suffers! But it is all in the name of being prepared for pastoral leadership.
3. Peter addresses the *motives* for pastoral leadership:
 - (a) It should be done with *freedom* – not *compulsion*;
 - (b) It should be done for *service* – not for *reward*
 - (c) Examples.
4. Pastors should be *lowly* – not *lordly* (hint at “in the same way” – vs. 5).
Examples.
5. Pastors should not forget the result of being lordly and not lowly (vs. 5 – the quote from Proverbs 3:34)!

II. This leadership may reproduce itself in the church (vs.5)

1. Caring pastoral leadership is an extremely powerful motivator in a church:
 - (a) It provides a (role) model (see vs. 3!);

- (b) It encourages a “leadership culture” or leadership “legacy” (“Young men”);
- (c) It provides harmony, humility and submission in the church ;
- (d) It fleshes out and manifests the grace of God in the church (Proverbs 3:34).

2. We reproduce after our own kind.

III. The Lord will reward this kind of leadership

1. It is a *fantastic* reward – a crown of glory (see vs.11)!
2. It is a *futuristic* reward – don’t look for it in this life, but at the start of the next – vs.4!
3. It is a *fade-resistant* reward (vs.4): The magnificence of a vintage 1932 Duesenburg or Mercedes. They don’t die!
4. About a year after I graduated high school, and I was in my first year of Bible College, I met a former high school classmate and told him what I was doing with my life. He replied incredulously, “Come on, Friday! You can do better than that!” That’s what the world screams at us about serving Jesus. They all say, “Get out of that! It doesn’t pay, and it doesn’t *look* like it’s going to pay!” “**Not so!**” screams back the word of God! But it *does* pay!

Conclusion:

So there it is: Pastors must give caring leadership; this leadership may reproduce itself in the church; and the Lord will reward this kind of leadership. The text today has specifically cited pastoral leadership, but evidently these principles are completely applicable to **all** leadership in the church. We must resist the temptation to be leaders **with** crowns! That is not what the Bible teaches us. Resist the temptation to be leaders looking for crowns! That, also, is not what the Bible teaches. Instead, let's be leaders who are aware that at the end of faithful infectious, painful service, there is a crown that awaits us.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

Sermon Ten

“All’s Well That Ends Well!”

I Peter 5:6-11

Introduction:

1. What makes us trust people? Why do you trust the people you trust?

Haven’t people we trusted let us down? Don’t tell me that a car salesman never lied to you! Or that a politician never misled you! Anywhere you might go across the expanse of creation, you will find people burned by others whom they trusted. Some of those people never trust again. They say, “I’ll never trust another human being again; I’ll never fall in love again.” Some of them become hardened, and may even pursue criminal intentions. But such people are in a minority – the majority of us go on to trust again...and be burned again...trust again, and be burned again.
2. Then it occurred to me: how is it that it is so easy for us to trust people again and again after they have let us down again and again, and it is so hard to trust God, who has never let us down? Search inside yourself honestly: haven’t we found it easier to trust some ordinary-sounding thing that a human promises, than it is to trust some extraordinary-sounding thing that God promises us? But isn’t it within man’s nature to be ordinary? And isn’t it within God’s nature to be extraordinary? And

haven't ordinary people, making ordinary promises, brought us extraordinary disappointment? You tell me now, truthfully: has God – even when he has made extraordinary promises – ever broken one of them?

3. I want to tell you this morning that you should trust God completely. And then I will tell you why. **Read I Peter 5:6-11**

I. You (DCC) should trust God completely (vs.6-7)

1. You trust God by “humbling yourself under his hand” (vs.6):
 - (a) It is an act of complete surrender;
 - (b) It is like a newborn sleeping blissfully in its mother's arms;
 - (c) It is trusting God's timing and judgment as perfect and flawless.
2. You trust God by not worrying about a thing:
 - (a) You can be *certain* that God cares for you (vs.7);
 - (b) You can just dash it *all* on him (completely)!
3. You do not lose when you surrender to God – he will “raise you up in due time.”
4. Example.

II. You (DCC) should beware of the devil completely (vs.8-9)

1. Your sufferings are either *of* the devil or *exploited* by the opportunist devil:
2. Be on high alert for the devil!

3. You fight the devil by resistance in, with and through your faith:
 - (a) You are not alone as you resist him – believers all over the world suffer and resist the devil, and so did Jesus! (Matthew 4, Luke 4).

III. You (DCC) will be restored completely (vs.10-11)

1. God will restore you after you have suffered awhile:
2. The restoration involves relief, resurgence and rest.
3. **(B.I): Diasporic (Caribbean) Christians should trust God completely because he will restore them completely.**
4. Examples.

Conclusion

1. Everyone knows that Shakespeare wrote great plots and plays. Some are tragic, like *Hamlet, Prince of Denmark*. Others are comic, like, *All's Well That Ends Well*. If you know the plot of that play, at the end of a convoluted, intricate scheme, a young Countess outwits a young Count in order to hold him to his promise of marriage. It ended well.
2. You should know by now that your life is no play, and that God is no Shakespeare! But I tell you this: while the best that Shakespeare could manage is the phrase, “all’s well that ends well”, hear what God says in his word: he says, “If I begin a good work in you, I will carry it on to

completion until your salvation is perfectly sealed” (Phil.1:6 – clarify that this is a paraphrase!!). “All’s well that ends well.”

3. You may suffer in this life; lose in this life; be a second-class citizen in this life. You may be doubted in this life; misunderstood, discounted and distrusted – you may suffer. You may be tempted, tricked, maybe even brutalized, but God has kept you in community through your suffering. He remembers that he called you to holy living, and to live out a missionary purpose in your suffering. God is faithful and God is gracious. When that suffering is all done, he will restore you; he will heal the wounds; he will remove the sorrow, he will take away the clouds of suspicion and testing. He will end it well. You might not end back up in the Caribbean, but it will end well. You might not ever be anything but an alien in the eyes of your neighbours, but it will end well. You may never live out, completely – or at all – the “American Dream”, but it will end well. You may even die in sorrow, but I promise you this: it will end well! “All’s well that ends well.” Why? It is because God has started a good thing in you, and he will finish it. Go and live by faith! Live in confidence! And live in joy! “All’s well that ends well!” Go!

Chapter Five

Preaching To Diasporic Caribbean Christians: *Could the Discussion Be Made Clearer?*

Twelve persons participated in a presentation of the Project outlined in Chapter 4. Nine of the twelve are preachers, and two of the other three are non-Caribbean immigrants. Of the three, two are university professors, and one is a postgraduate. It was believed that these three persons' academic perspective would be invaluable for an exercise of this nature. All of the participants are engaged in ministry in local congregations – the preachers as preachers, and the non-preachers as key support persons in ministry.

The presentation was made with an economy – and perhaps inadequacy – of introductory remarks. This was because few of the participants were able to grant the full time I had requested (4 hours), so an adjustment had to be made. Included in those remarks however, was that the Project was an *outline*, the flesh of which lay in the rest of the thesis, which was not presented. This may have been a “built-in” deficiency, compared to those projects which may be curricula or a series of classes, or a series of sermons, which, by their very nature, require presentation in full. A project that is a book outline is necessarily different.

The Project Feedback Group made a significant number of invaluable observations and suggestions. Some led to a sprinkling of fundamental changes (that should have already been apparent to the author), which have already been applied to what finally appears as Chapter Four in this volume; others will need to be applied to the Project when it metamorphoses into the Book that it promises. The participants' observations and comments are sufficient to move the writer to consider the following adjustments for the future. At times reference will be made to some of the actual comments and quotes. In those cases, the participant's initials will follow the references.

Presentation and Organization

The proposed book title seems too wordy. Further, "The title leaves the suggestion that the book will be about Asia Minor. It seems confusing to have the 'original resident aliens' in the title. The link to *Resident Aliens* is appropriate, but needs to be adjusted to better fit the DCC/Caribbean emphasis of the book" (SC).

There may be too many chapters; the outline is "copious" and "expeditious" (SR), and at 51 pages, may be overwhelming (BM). "The breadth of the topics threatens to overwhelm the reader. Core insights may well get (*sic*) lost in the variety of topics covered" (SR). It is recommended that the author consider streamlining the material better – ferreting out the material more

judiciously. The author is encouraged and think two books, not just one! He should also be mindful of the overlap of material.

Somewhere in the introduction, the writer should suggest how academic inquiry, theological study, and survey feedback all combine to produce materials that inform the body of Christ.

A re-ordering or regrouping of the chapters might be considered, so that they flow more systematically. More than one recommendation was received suggesting that the current Chapter 1 be *not* retained as the first chapter. One participant (FW) suggested the following reordering:

Section 1: An Introduction to Diasporic Theology

Chapter 1 – Diasporic Theology

Chapter 2 – Identity, Identity, Identity

Chapter 3 – Diasporic (Caribbean) Christian Community

Section 2: Diasporic Formations in Scripture and Sub-cultures

Chapter 4 – Peter’s World and Ours

Chapter 5 – Diaspora and Suffering

Chapter 6 – Mission in Diaspora

Section 3: Engaging the Diasporic Christian Community

Chapter 7 – The Diasporic Preacher

Chapter 8 – The Sermon as a Product of Christian Community

Chapter 9 – Preaching to All Diasporic Christians

This participant also recommends placing relevant sermons at the end of each section, rather than at the end of the book in one group. This may be necessary.

Finally the writer needs to examine whether he brings sufficient focus to the organization of his material so that the book self-declares whether it is a historical book, a theological discourse, a biblical application or “something about the current church” (BM).

More Clarification and Definition Needed

Among the areas that appear to need more clarification and defining are:

1. Caribbean theology – what is it? How does it differ from, say European or African Theology?
2. “Caribbean Church” – what is it?
3. The Caribbean – what is it? What are its geographical and cultural boundaries? This should be clarified, lest non-black and non-English speakers be inadequately addressed or even appear shafted, in the book.
4. The difference between a community mentoring group (CMG) and a sermon feedback group may need more clarification.
5. How Jesus is “diasporic” or “exilic” or a fellow “alien” and “stranger.”

Readership

A need for deciding who the book's target group is meant to be has been detected. Notwithstanding, as asked by the feedback document (see Appendix III), the participants see considerable promise and value in the project for Caribbean people in the Caribbean, Caribbean people in America, Americans and other diasporic people. As it is, it "provides much food for thought especially for denominational leaders with members in the diaspora (regarding how to think about caring for their spiritual and life needs" (CC). It also "provides much food for thought especially for diasporic preachers in Chapter 8 – the most practically relevant chapter for clergypersons and parishioners" (CC).

Caution

More proof may be needed for some premises or givens:

1. Do Caribbean people really suffer in the US or do they enjoy a better standard of living than those they left behind in the Caribbean?
2. The project does expose the author to a risk of discounting other Christian groups while legitimately exploring diasporic Christians.
3. Care is to be exercised in keeping consistency in showing the difference between exile/exilic and diaspora/diasporic.
4. More information may be needed to justify First Peter as more relevant to this work, than say, material about Israel's sojourn in Egypt or the Exile in Babylon. (This is a valid observation since the justification that clearly

reposes in the thesis [Chapters 1-3] may have become lost in transmission to Chapter 4).

5. The author should bear in mind the fact that limited sampling from the questionnaires disallows the overstating of conclusions.

On The Right Track

The author is strongly advised to keep the following foci:

1. Christians in general as diasporic people in the world;
2. The discussions of I Peter (and what it offers for seeing the universal church as alien in society);
3. “Theocentric” rather than “culturecentric” preaching;
4. Integration, not segregation, as the goal of Diasporic congregations;
5. The emphasis on biblical interpretation as a product of the community especially with an emphasis on mechanisms to keep interpretation community-oriented (Sermon Feedback and Community Mentoring Groups of Chapter 8);
6. Chapters 4, 7 and 8 were singled out as “great” chapters.

Specifically Regarding Preaching

“Good stories make good sermons and if the book can retell the stories of West Indians in the USA, their journey through faith, their self-imposed exile in this country and elsewhere and how this affects or strengthens their faith, then it

will be worthwhile” (BM). Another respondent recommends “adding personal stories of other Caribbean immigrants along with the references to personal experiences of (the author) and his family” (DC). One member urges adding a CD/DVD with the sermons actually being delivered, if cost effective. He adds, “The book project has forced me to seek out the recommended texts and to rethink my approach to sermonizing in my community of diasporic peoples. This is a necessary impact which I see for the book on all preachers” (CC). Finally, some participants raised the question whether there was scope for preaching to all immigrants, rather than just the Christians, notwithstanding the theological undergirding of First Peter. Admittedly, this question did nag this author at several points during the months that this work was in progress.

Conclusions

Were this Project (The Book Outline) to be presented again, it should benefit from a more substantial introduction. It would certainly be wise to revisit the organization of the material, as well as considering more than one book. The writer remains convinced that First Peter is the most relevant scriptural foundation to treat with this issue, and so will consider a more fulsome explanation to justify to the readers-hearers why First Peter, and not material from the Pentateuch or exilic or post-exilic material, is most appropriate. Even if the result may not be different, it is worth examining this study again to see

whether there is any scope in First Peter for preaching to all people (not only Christians, and not only those in diaspora).

Allowing for sufficient clarification concerning the definition of “Caribbean”, it is affirmed that Christian Caribbean immigrants in the USA have a strong faith that has often been honed in the Caribbean. They have experiences in the new home that identify them as alien, and some do suffer in a variety of ways for that identity. They have a responsibility to be “faithful to that faith” and faithful in suffering to the extent that they bear witness to the God of their faith so as to influence others to that faith. They must therefore receive a pulpit ministry that is aware of these realities and facilitates their success in accomplishing God’s will for them in a land originally not their own and still not their own, since they are “aliens” and “strangers”, more because of their faith, than because of their Caribbean identity. Second-generation Caribbean immigrants, though often reared very close to the cultures and values of their elders may require slight alterations to this pulpit ministry, but nonetheless, essentially the same.

It is expected that this study and the resulting publication would be useful to all preachers, but especially those who minister to Caribbean and other immigrants in the USA or anywhere. It is perceived, too, that this material might stimulate preachers in territories from whence immigrants leave for the USA.

Pastor-preachers there might be able to prepare their people for the vagaries, uncertainties and experiences they will encounter when they leave home for a new home, and when they spatially become Christians in diaspora.

APPENDIX I

Pastor-Preacher Questionnaire (PQ)

INVESTIGATING PREACHING TO CARIBBEAN IMMIGRANTS (FOR PASTORS)

17 Targets
6 Respondents (35% return rate)

Dear Colleague:

I am a doctoral candidate at the Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary outside Boston. I am writing a thesis that needs information about **preaching that is aimed at Caribbean immigrants**. This questionnaire is necessary for the research. All questionnaires shall remain confidential; your identity is not required, enabling you to answer *all* questions honestly and candidly. I am grateful for your participation. Please return the finished document in the envelope provided. If you wish to know the results of this survey you may email me at **rev_manfriday@hotmail.com** - Michael Friday.

1. **I consider Caribbean immigrants as people in exile or Diaspora (*check appropriate box*).**

Strongly Disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Neutral <input type="checkbox"/>	Agree <input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly Agree <input type="checkbox"/>
16.6%			50%	33.4%

- 2a. **Do you preach with a consciousness that identifies Caribbean immigrants as exilic or diasporic people?**

Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
66.7%	33.3%

- 2b. **If yes, what makes such sermons different? (*Check all that apply*)**

The issues I preach about make the sermon different	<input type="checkbox"/>	50%
The language I use makes the sermon different	<input type="checkbox"/>	67%
The particular texts I use make the sermon different	<input type="checkbox"/>	50%
The illustrations I use make the sermon different	<input type="checkbox"/>	67%
The theology I use makes the sermon different	<input type="checkbox"/>	67%

Other Comments

Relevance – The Word must become flesh
The way Bible is read “consciously”
Style and content

- 3a. **Do you think that diasporic people need a special kind of sermon?**

Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
80%	20%

3b. If yes, what will make the sermon peculiar?*For the responses below check ALL that apply*

Style <input type="checkbox"/>	Focus/Content <input type="checkbox"/>	Structure <input type="checkbox"/>	Theology <input type="checkbox"/>	Hermeneutics <input type="checkbox"/>
67%	83%	17%	50%	33%

4. Has your preaching changed since you have been preaching in the USA (compared to your preaching in the Caribbean)? Yes ☐ No ☐ If "yes", say:**100%****4a. How?**

I recognize I am in a different context

The people are in a strange land; I preach to help them "sing the Lord's song" here

A greater sensitivity to be more respectful the new home as "the system" is challenged

More sensitive to peoples need for better life quality

4b. Why?

I'm now preaching to ethnic multiplicity; I have to be more sensitive to that now

They are dealing with issues of racism, culture shock, adjustments, etc

Style and delivery different

5. With regards to preaching, have you observed anything in the USA, in any tradition or congregation – Caribbean oriented or otherwise – that you consider inappropriate or inadequate for Caribbean immigrants? If yes, state answer in space below.

Nothing

No answer

The idea that our identity, experience and orientation should be lost (assimilated) here

Insufficient commitment to service in/through the local church

Inadequate appetite for the teaching of the Word

6. I think that Caribbean immigrants in the USA demonstrate a distinguishable faith, or even a distinguishable theology.

Strongly Disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Neutral <input type="checkbox"/>	Agree <input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly Agree <input type="checkbox"/>
17%	33%		50%	

7a. Caribbean immigrants in the USA interpret and demonstrate their faith in ways distinguishable from American Christians.

Strongly Disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Neutral <input type="checkbox"/>	Agree <input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly Agree <input type="checkbox"/>
	17%	17%	67%	

7b. If you agreed or strongly agreed to question 7a, say (in space provided) how Caribbean immigrants practice their faith differently from Americans.

Caribbeans more “grounded in basic theological teachings
 Caribbeans “seem to understand the meaning of salvation in its entirety” (more than many American Christians)
 God is larger in Caribbean “world view” than American
 Caribbeans are more frequent in worship
 Caribbean preaching is less emotional, more “lecture” type
 Caribbeans faith is more important to their self-worth and identity

8. What cultural concerns do you believe Caribbean immigrants need to have addressed by their preachers?

Homeland Distinctives 30% (of answers)

Language – it’s OK to have different accents
 Embrace their (especially positive) music
 Love of homeland

Spiritual 30%

The sameness of God in diaspora as at home
 Style of worship
 Positive engagement in America w/out apology for origin

Historical 20%

Embrace their “stories, myths and legends as part of...their history”
 “The meaning of the exodus in their context”

Ethical 20%

How to assess and evaluate cultural practices with the Word
 How to distinguish between what is culturally described and what is ethically prescribed in the Bible

No answer 17% (of sample)

9. What problems or challenges do Caribbean immigrants face that they need their church’s pulpit ministry to address regularly?

Struggles 20% (of answers)

Prejudice and injustice

Integration issues (30%)

Process of living in a strange land
 Identity
 Immigration issues

Socio-economic issues (30%)

Educational demands/differences and preparation for life in diaspora
Economic empowerment

The ability to determine right and wrong when the Bible appears silent on a matter (10%)

America's role in world affairs (10%)

10. What theological/religious/biblical concerns do you believe Caribbean immigrants need to have addressed by their preachers?

Assurance that, (like the OT exiles) the same God from the Caribbean is with them in the USA (**reconfiguration**);

Hope that despite present conditions, their future is bright;

Cultural differences as they relate to faith;

Loving God and neighbour;

The meaning of **community**;

Honesty issues (as relate to survival in America);

Mission to world and homeland;

Ethical education:

Basic Christian doctrine in a pluralistic environment

Maintaining spiritual vitality in a fluid society

Hearing God amidst the noise of media

Same as anybody else regardless of origin.

11. Walter Brueggemann (*Cadences of Home*) speaks about a homiletic imagination that re-imagines, reinterprets, and reorganizes faith and applies it to current realities. Do any of the following issues, from First Peter, strike you as having potential for reinterpreting Caribbean diasporic reality? Check all that apply. Add any others in space provided.

☐ Suffering, socially, because of faith in Christ
67%

☐ Having a heavenly inheritance despite being "exiles/aliens"
83%

☐ Fitting in to a "foreign" society and culture as Christian responsibility
100%

☐ Suffering as an underdog
100%

☐ Being among a special, blessed people/heritage (i.e. Caribbean people)
83%

☐ Maintaining Christian integrity and faith in a culture that is hostile to that faith
100%

If there are other issues you have noted, please state at the top of the next page:

12. In your preaching, or in your preparation to preach, what things about American culture – or even American religion – would you caution or discourage your Caribbean immigrant parishioners about adopting or assimilating?

American “Icons”

Permissive American society

American society “insularity” to a certain extent

The false trappings attending being a resident in a “super-power” nation

Rugged individualistic ethic which militates against neighborliness and community

Ethical astuteness: “Agnosticism about truth and moral absolutes”

Materialism

The prosperity gospel

“Over-emotionalism”

Inferiority

Fear of seeing the world through a black person’s eyes

Fear of disagreeing with “white perspectives”

Dismissing economic and social issues from gospel challenge

13a. What Caribbean values are you convinced you should encourage Caribbean immigrants to maintain, both in the name of their “Caribbean-ness” and Christianity?

Faith 47%

Commitment to Christ

Commitment to church

“Real and demonstrative faith”

Trusting God despite...

Allowing faith in God to inform total life

Trusting the Bible implicitly

Family 20%

Commitment to family

Care for others beyond the immediate family

Caribbean Heritage 20%

Appreciation for Caribbean heritage

Values more readily evident in Caribbean than USA 13%

Respect and humility

13b. Do Caribbean immigrants seem to be abandoning any of those values you identify?

Yes ☐

No ☐

100%

14. If you have pastored a non-Caribbean congregation (or one where Caribbeans were a minority), did you detect any difference in your preaching there, compared to the Caribbean congregation?

Yes ☐ No ☐ Whether yes or no, state why it was or wasn't different.
40% **20%**
N/A **40%**

Bolder and "more flavorful" now that I know (my Caribbean) audience better
 Most of my preaching done in US
 I was immature before

15. Is there something distinguishable about Caribbean Christian faith that you would like to see Caribbean immigrants retain, as immigrants to America? State:

***Biblical knowledge and theological maturity* 60% (of answers)**

"Their knack to exercise (sic) sound Biblical principles"
 A hunger for "challenging preaching"
 (They should) just continue in the faith towards maturity

***Service and Growth* 40%**

Faithful, sacrificial service to God
 "Joy in struggle"

16. Have you ever felt ostracized, misunderstood, prejudged, or disadvantaged (economically, socially or otherwise) in the USA because you are

a Caribbean immigrant Yes ☐ No ☐
80% **20%**

a Christian Yes ☐ No ☐ Elaborate in space below:
40%

***Foreign Accent* 33% (of respondents)**

Misunderstood because of exotic accent, enunciation;
 I have even been "corrected" with word pronunciation and inflection

***Size* 17%**

(Americans) mistaking geographical size of Caribbean islands (as indicative of the intellectual acumen of Caribbeans)

***Origin or Skin color* 17%**

Denied educational opportunities/benefits because of non-American citizenship

***Status* 17%**

INS status denying work allowed only menial tasks and feelings of disadvantage

Many thanks! Some of your parishioners also received a version of this questionnaire. Please encourage them to complete and return them to me immediately (in addressed/stamped envelope). – M.F.

APPENDIX II

Member Questionnaire (MQ)

INVESTIGATING PREACHING TO CARIBBEAN IMMIGRANTS (FOR MEMBERS)

115 Targets
31 Respondents (27% return)

Dear Friend:

I am a doctoral candidate at the Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary outside Boston. I am writing a thesis that needs information about **preaching that is aimed at Caribbean immigrants**. This questionnaire is necessary for the research. All questionnaires shall remain confidential; your identity is not required, enabling you to answer *all* questions honestly and candidly. I am grateful for your participation. Please return the finished document in the envelope provided. If you wish to know the results of this survey you may email me at **rev_manfriday@hotmail.com** - Rev. Michael Friday.

1. As a Caribbean immigrant, I consider myself in exile or diaspora

Strongly Disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Neutral <input type="checkbox"/>	Agree <input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly Agree <input type="checkbox"/>
25.8%	38.7%	12.9%	19.4%	3.2%

2. As a Caribbean immigrant, I need a kind of sermon different to what Americans need.

Strongly Disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Neutral <input type="checkbox"/>	Agree <input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly Agree <input type="checkbox"/>
16.1%	48.4%	9.7%	19.4%	6.4%

3. What problems or challenges do you and other Caribbean immigrants face that you need addressed regularly by your church's pulpit ministry?

None	7.3%
No answer	3.6%
Immaterial answer	3.6%
Nothing peculiar to Caribbean people	1.8%

***Integration Issues* 12.7%**

“Respect the country in which we reside but never neglect where we came from...”

Involvement in community affairs

Tension between Carib and Americ Africans

Connecting the Africans in diaspora from Africa, America, Caribbean

Understanding the new society

Cultural Differences

Integration issues

***Economics & Social* 12.7%**

Economic challenges

Money management, giving
 Other social issues
 Poor leadership
 Empowerment

***Immigration Issues* 10.9%**

The fact that illegal immigration is not God's will
 The fact that God is bigger than immigration problems
 Unemployment arising from immigration issues
 Other immigration issues

***Morality* 10.9%**

Sexuality issues
 Relationships
 Drug culture

***Spiritual Concerns* 9.1%**

Secularization
 'Where is God in all that is happening around us?'
 Maintaining the zeal of faith here as in the Caribbean
 Insignificant role of faith in public/schools

***Church-Community Related* 9.1%**

Dying interest in worship, fellowship, church
 Worship differences

***Family Issues* 7.3%**

Keeping children on right path; parental issues
 Caring for seniors
 Neglected children
 Other family issues

***Justice* 5.4%**

Injustice
 Prejudice

***Homeland Issues* 3.6%**

Remember where we came from

Other Difficulties

4. If you have observed anything in the USA, concerning preaching, that you consider inappropriate or inadequate for you as a Christian of Caribbean origin, state what, below:

Nothing
 No answer
 Immaterial answer
 Answer difficult to decipher

Overemphasis on Money 18.8%

Heavy emphasis on monetary giving
 (Preachers of Caribbean origin who) get “hung up too much” on money/material things
 Too much emphasis on prosperity and too little on holiness
 Too much focus on money, too little on spiritual

General Unspiritual Behavior 9.4%

A “lack of anointing” in both Caribbean and American preachers
 Inappropriate behavior of “men of the cloth”
 “Gay preachers not good example of Christian ministry”

Improper Focus on Trivia or Other 9.4%

Pastoral competitiveness
 Too much prominence to cultural issues
 More humor than teaching in pulpit

Inadequate exegesis/biblical grounding 9.4%

Lack of biblical preaching
 Minimizing the quality time for sermon
 Shallow, superfluous sermons

Sermon presentation 6.2%

Reading from a script instead of “preaching from the heart”
 Preaching as oratory, more than spiritual message

Segregated congregations, Race Emphasis! 6.2%***Inadequate spiritual emphases 3.1%***

Inadequate emphasis on spiritual growth

5. What would you want your pastor/preacher to bear in mind about you, a Caribbean immigrant, when he or she prepares for, and preaches in the pulpit?

Biblical/spiritual development 31.4%

Just preach the word
 “Preach like Jesus”
 Relating “everyday life situations...to the teachings of the Bible”
 Biblical doctrine
 Truth that transcends cultural barriers
 Caribbeans want more exegesis
 Evangelistic development

No distinction or special thoughts necessary 17.1%

Preacher need not make this distinction
 We are no different to others
 Same as everyone else

Caribbean heritage 17.1%

Emphasis on Caribbean upbringing, despite being abroad

Incorporate some Caribbean traditions into worship service
That we valuable (children of God) regardless of origin

Faith issues 8.6%

That I need help remaining faithful to God
We take our faith seriously

Integration issues 8.6%

Help us understand our identity and destiny
Diversity
Cultural differences that need clear explanation

Socio-economic problems 5.7%

Problems with housing, employment, health services
The reason I came to America – a better life

Coping with struggles/suffering 5.7%

The struggles we face and the need to “stay the course”
Immigrant challenges

The Challenges to Morality 2.9%

The prevalence of, and ease of entanglement in, immorality

Other

“Distractions with the state of arts and technology”

6a. I think that Caribbean Christians in the USA demonstrate a quality of Christian faith and living that stands out even among American Christians, generally.

Strongly Disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Neutral <input type="checkbox"/>	Agree <input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly Agree <input type="checkbox"/>
3.2%	19.3%	16.1%	38.7%	22.6%

6b. If you agreed or strongly agreed, what makes Caribbean Christians’ faith and living stand out even among American Christians?

Caribbean faith was developed in austere conditions 18.4%

(We received) Christian teaching about contentment
Our faith was developed in conditions without (material) distractions
Caribbean Christian teaching that God provides
Having to trust God more in situations of deprivation and succeed where not expected to
Caribbean Christian faith is strong, facilitates major projects

Caribbean faith permeates through whole fabric of life 18.4%

Caribbean Church life is wrapped up in the whole fabric of life; in America, church is more “by-the-way”
Place church has in family life
Caribbeans are more born again, and less church membership

Caribbean Christians’ attitude/commitment is greater 15.8%

More ready to take responsibilities in the church
Greater commitment to family and church family

Greater community action
 Caribbeans take church and Sundays more seriously/regularly
 We are a God-fearing people

Faith content - what we learned about the faith is critical 13.1%

Christian teaching that God is in control
 “Belief system” developed as a youth in Caribbean

American habits/culture places them (and immigrants who choose it) behind 5.3%

The 3 jobs people have to hold here kills availability for church

Caribbean faith is more conservative 2.6%

Against gay marriages

7. What cultural concerns do you believe Caribbean immigrants need to have addressed by their pastors’ preaching?

None
 No answer
 Immaterial answer
 All major differences

Identity/Status Integration and Diversity matters/issues 27.8%

Issues that reflect our immigration (dual) status that help us keep identity
 American cultural influence on younger immigrant Caribbean generations
 Maintaining Caribbean standards and values
 Tolerance in a diverse society with a view to integration
 We face cultural conflicts
 That we are valuable “big” people despite our island origin

Family matters 22.2%

Parental laxity among some parents who allow their children to engage here, in some things they would never allow back in Caribbean
 Keeping our children on the right track
 Self-respect and for others

Worship and spirituality issues 13.9%

Issues related to our fellowship habits and membership retention rate – both are better in the Caribbean)
 Worship art forms
 Maintaining our ancestors’ strong faith

Social issues 5.5%

Housing
 Materialism

8a. Have you ever had membership in or visited a church in the USA that did not have a majority Caribbean membership, and you disliked the church because of the preaching?

Yes ☐
38.7%

No ☐
61.3%

8b. If yes, what was it about the preaching that left you disappointed or wanting?

***Insufficient theological, exegetical, biblical, content issues* 33.3%**

Insufficient emphasis on Bible teaching
Too many sermons based on personal stories
Insufficient exegesis – only “regurgitation of the Bible”
Insufficient focus on everyday living

***Sermon technicals* 20%**

Preaching Style
Inadequate time in/for the sermon
“Very bland”, lacking excitement or joy /

***(Cultural, ethnic) insensitivity (prejudice)* 20%**

The preacher’s comment about being aware of immigrants who come to take away
American patrimony (immigrant bashing)
The preacher made fun of my denomination (I was a visitor)

***Credibility issues* 13.3%**

“It’s amazing how missionaries from the US come to the Caribbean and preach one thing
but in their own culture they practice something else. It’s like do as I say not as I
do”
More emphasis on fashion/garments than preaching/teaching

***Genuine culture clashes* 6.7%**

“Too different!” (it was an African-American church)

***Money overemphasis* 6.7%**

9. Is there anything about American culture – or even religion – you would caution your loved ones or yourself about adopting or assimilating?

Nothing, nothing more than Caribbean culture 16.7%

***Materialism* 35.7%**

Materialistic society, forcing God into background – watch it!
Showiness
Abandoning integrity for fleeting gains
Getting rich overnight without hard work

“Churchiness” not spirituality 16.7%

Taking membership in large churches simply for prestige
 Emotional excesses in worship
 Unfriendliness
 Church too segregated
 Risk of cultism

Criminal elements 11.9%

Bad company
 Wrong lifestyle

Faith-loss and other faith issues 11.9%

How easy it is to become faith-sidetracked in America
 Straying from the Bible and what it offers
 Daily conduct that makes a Christian indistinguishable from the unbeliever
 Irreverence

General undesirables 9.5%

Some of its “practices”
 Fast-paced “throw away” culture
 Pseudo 1st world culture
 Life in an apartment complex

Inferiority issues 2.4%

Underestimating one’s cultural worth

10. What Caribbean values are you convinced that you, and other Caribbean immigrants to the USA, should maintain?

No answer

Spirituality & Church 35.7%

Holiness
 Religious training
 Respect for God’s house (including leadership)
 Faithful church membership
 Respect for pastor as shepherd
 How to worship God
 Christian values
 Rich faith
 Respect and love for God
 Sacredness of the Sabbath
 Steadfastness in serving God
 Ensuring college students maintain church membership

Social ethic and Work ethic 32.1%

Respect for others
 “Decent dress” for worship
 Strong work ethic

Educational improvement
 High moral values
 Confidence, dignity
 Caring for others
 Respect and love for elders
 Neighborliness and hospitality
 Money management

***Family & Patriotism* 26.2%**

Loyalty
 Family linkages
 Stimulating Christian education for the children
 Ensuring that children born in US remain exposed to Caribbean culture
 Integrity – refusing to “do as the Romans do” though “in Rome”
 Child rearing; discipline in the home

***Cultural* 2.4%**

Rich music and other cultural valuables

Immaterial answer

11. Do Caribbean immigrants seem to be abandoning any of those values you identify?

Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
83.9%	12.9%

12. Have you ever felt ostracized, misunderstood, prejudged, or disadvantaged (economically, socially or otherwise) in the USA because you are

(a) a Caribbean immigrant?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	
	61.3%	35.5%	
		no answer	3.2%
(b) a Christian?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	
	29%	58%	
		no answer	13%

Elaborate in space here:

Answer yes, but no elaboration 3.2%

***Accent related issues* 28%**

Denied promotion because of accent (even though better spoken)
 (Students ridiculed) my accent
 Other accent related issue

***Ethos-clashes (We are so different socially or spiritually)* 20%**

As a Christian we are more peaceful and tolerant
 As Christians, “we can’t do all the crazy things they do”

(I was) Called over-zealous and over-righteous
Being misunderstood because of commitments and dedication

Unfair and untrue assumptions 16%

Assumed to be uneducated because I'm Caribbean
Assumed to be inferior because I'm Caribbean
Considered stupid or oddball because of accent
Getting used to absence of morning greetings (I thought Americans were unmannerly!)

Benefit-discrimination 16%

Denied scholarships because of immigrant status
Devaluation underestimation of Caribbean academic qualifications and value
Denied invitations to certain places

Work related discrimination 8%

Other entrenched workplace traditions
Some Caribbean immigrants feel slighted by some African-Americans who appear threatened or offended by their upward mobility

Unfriendly churches 8%

Some Caribbean immigrants feel so unwelcome in African-American churches that they seek congregations that are nearly or purely Caribbean

A unique response: 4%

"I promised myself upon entry yrs ago that 'nobody' will ever make me feel inferior. I never have."

13. The First Letter of Peter contains certain themes that Peter considers as he addresses Christians whom he calls "exiles", "aliens" and "strangers in the land." They are mentioned below. Do any of them apply to you? Check all that apply.

- ☐ You suffer discrimination, ostracism, verbal abuse, harassment, employment disadvantages, or suspicions that could lead to accusations, socially, because of your Christian, or foreign, or Caribbean, identity
32.2% (of sample)
- ☐ You have an inheritance despite being "exiles/aliens"
29%
- ☐ You have to fit into a "foreign" society and culture as your Christian responsibility
45.2%
- ☐ You suffer as an "underdog"
29%
- ☐ You feel you are among a special, blessed people/heritage – Caribbean immigrants
58.1%
- ☐ You have to maintain Christian integrity in a culture that is hostile to your faith
61.3%

No answer 16.1%

14a. Compared to the Caribbean, do you sometimes feel as though, in America, you are a stranger in a “pagan” society (given the issues of homosexuality and gay marriage, partial birth abortions, atheists contesting “in God we trust” etc., hostility against “Merry Christmas” greetings, nativity scenes, hostility against prayer in schools, etc)?

Yes ☐

80.6%

No ☐

19.3

Unique Answer:

America is expected to be pluralistic; therefore all values to be expected

14b. Do you think that the preaching in your church adequately helps you cope with this situation?

Yes ☐

71%

No ☐

29%

Many thanks! Please place the finished questionnaire in the envelope provided and mail it immediately to me. If you know another person who has received this questionnaire, please encourage him or her to complete and return theirs immediately. - M.F.

APPENDIX III

Doctor of Ministry Thesis-Project Presentation Feedback Document

This document was distributed to participants to whom a Presentation of Chapter Four was made.

1. What items or areas of weakness do you detect in this project?
2. Given its title and scope, would you say that there is any significant oversight in this book outline? If so, what?
3. What turns you off about this book outline or waves any “red flags”?
4. If you were to be writing this book, what adjustments or improvements would you consider making, given what you see in this outline?
5. What do you think about the organization of the material?
6. Do you have any other technical or stylistic observation?
7. In what ways do you think this book would make an impact on
 - (a) Caribbean readers in the Caribbean?
 - (b) American readers in America?
 - (c) Caribbean readers in America?
 - (d) Other Immigrant Christians in America?
8. What do you like most about this book outline? What do you feel has the most promise?
9. Does this proposed book bear the potential to offer preachers – whether Caribbean, American or Other; whether in diaspora or at home – anything new? What are some of those new things that jump to mind?

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VITA

Michael Peter Luke Friday was born June 17, 1958 on the Caribbean twin-island nation of Trinidad and Tobago. He was baptized as a young believer August 31, 1969. He graduated in June 1983 both from the University of the West Indies (UWI) with the Bachelor of Arts in Theology (Upper Second Class Honours) and from the United Theological College of the West Indies with the Diploma in Ministerial Studies (Best Academic Performance) – both in Jamaica. From 1996, Michael read part time at the UWI in Jamaica for the Master of Philosophy (M.Phil.) degree in Theology. His 2001 thesis is entitled, “Survival Issues in the Caribbean Baptist Fellowship.”

Michael, ordained in 1987, has served the Baptist Union of Trinidad and Tobago as a pastor and latterly as President. He also served the Jamaica Baptist Union and the Jamaica Constabulary Force (Police Chaplain). In August 2006 he left the American Baptist Churches of Connecticut to serve the New Life Baptist Church (ABCUSA), Bellevue, Nebraska, as Senior Pastor. Since 1983 he has been married to Vivienne Gordon, of Jamaica, with whom he has reared Davewin, Rhaema, and Jeremy.

He anticipates completing requirements for the Doctor of Ministry Degree by January 2007.